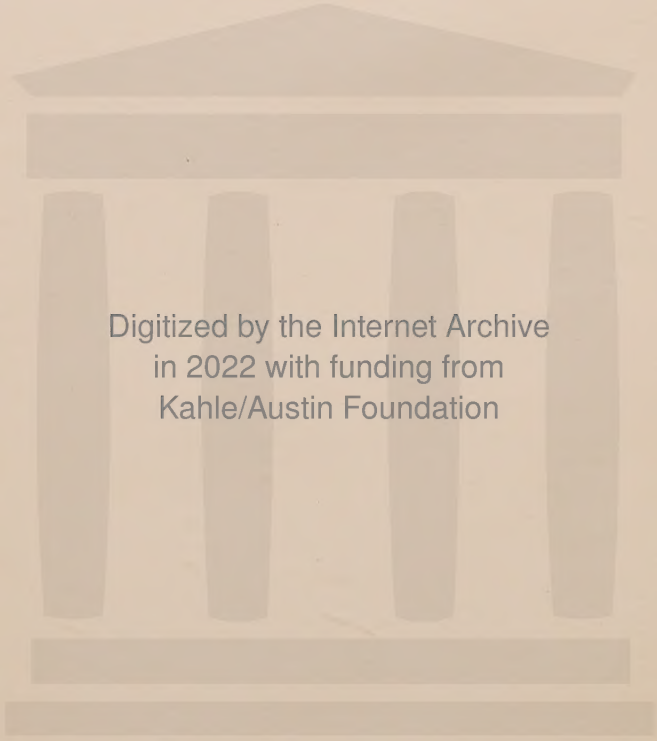
CHILDREN OF THE PROMISE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Children of the Promise

CHILDREN OF THE PROMISE

STORIES FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

Prepared for the
Deseret Sunday School Union

By

JOHN HENRY EVANS

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ON EAGLES' WINGS

Say to the House of Jacob, and tell the Children of Israel:

"Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people. For all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation."

The Lord to the Prophet Moses.

PREFACE

Although this little work is entitled "Children of the Promise," I have taken certain liberties with the traditional text in which these narratives have come down to us. In the first place, I have included such germane material as is found in modern revelation, and, in the second place, I have, wherever I could do so with reasonable literary smoothness, used the language of the sacred writers, without the customary ill looking quotation marks.

To Elder David O. McKay, General Superintendent of the Sunday Schools, and to Elder George M. Cannon, head of the department in which this book is to be used, I am particularly indebted for the solicitous and painstaking care with which they have watched over the preparation of the volume. Elders Stephen L. Richards and Horace H. Cummings also read the manuscript, to whom I give my thanks for valuable suggestions.

May I add one word more? The quotation after the flyleaf suggests, in my judgment, the point of view from which these chapters should

be read and taught. It gives both unity and direction to the varied material to be found in the history of the Israelites. Were it not for its awkwardness as the name of a serious work intended for classes, the title of this book would have been "On Eagles' Wings"—so powerfully did the phrase strike me as embodying the very spirit of what happened to that gifted people.

JOHN HENRY EVANS.

January, 1926.

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Children of the Promise

Chapter I

UP IN AN AEROPLANE!

It is said that one time a man put his head into a tub of water and kept it there while you might count fifty. That would be about twenty seconds. Yet it seemed to him a whole lifetime, so many things passed through his mind in that brief moment. But that is the way with the imagination, once you set it going or even let it go of its own accord.

We are about to try something like that in this chapter. We shall go up in an aeroplane, one that will not come down till we are ready and that is operated and controlled by the mind, not by a wheel and gas. Also we shall have with us a magic glass, which will enable us to see a long way off and at the same time to see small things as large—a sort of telescope and microscope in one. And we shall need to take a bird's-eye view, so to speak, of a great space of time, as much as two thousand years.

So here we are up in the air, miles and miles,

just below a great white cloud, the wonderful glass to our eye!

See that man who looks and walks like a king. He is crossing the Great Desert that stretches in hot sand dunes between that large green country to the east and the Great Sea to the west. His purpose is to settle, with his household, on that narrow strip of rich, hilly country on the eastern coast of the sea, which God has given him and his posterity forever. He travels about a great deal both in his own land and in Egypt, where he is received like a king.

Do you know who this man is? It is Abraham, and one of the stories that follow will tell you about him.

In that narrow strip by the sea he dies, this kingly-looking man, and is buried. But not before he has a son to take his place. And presently that son has a son, and that son twelve sons, who become, as time goes on, the founders of twelve tribes of people. The son of the kingly-looking man dies in his own country, but *his* son takes his family into Egypt, where one of his sons is all but ruler of the rich country of the Nile river.

In Egypt the children and children's children

of that first man we saw, lived for about four hundred years. And they grew in numbers till you could hardly count them. But they were very harshly treated by the people in whose country they were—especially towards the end. They were made slaves of, in fact.

These people were the Israelites.

Then a great deliverer appears. He, too, looks and acts like a king. In his rod is the power of the Lord, and on his lips. He defies the king of the land, and leads out his people by the power of God—leads them through an arm of the sea, which opens a dry pathway for the people, and into and across the Great Desert to the very borders of that narrow strip of rich, hilly country on the coast. Also he gives them laws that we still try to live by.

This deliverer was Moses.

Not this man, but another like him, leads this immense multitude of people, with their cattle and sheep and tents—twelve tribes under one head—into a Land of Promise, the land, you remember, that was given to the first kingly man we looked upon. And here, as we can see, they spread out over the country, conquering many of the tribes already there, and killing and

driving them out, with their strange gods of wood and stone. First they are governed by judges, under whose mild sway every man does what is right in his own sight, and then they have kings, after the fashion of their neighbors, kings that sometimes rule well and sometimes very ill.

As time goes on two sons of one of the kings have a quarrel. And then there are two kingdoms—one with ten tribes, and one with two. And each goes on its own way. Both ways are bad, on the whole, for most of the kings are bad kings. But one kingdom, the larger, is worse than the other. That is why we see now a great army coming across the desert from Babylonia and, after overcoming this worse kingdom, taking the people away with them and scattering them about, so that not many of them are afterwards to be found together. And then there is left only the smaller kingdom.

But only for a little while, as we measure time in our aeroplane. For presently we see another army marching across the Great Desert to the narrow strip of land, overcoming the armies of the little kingdom in battle, and then marching back to where they came from, carry-

ing with them king and nobles and people into captivity. And then the land is all but desolate again—except for heathen tribes.

The one kingdom was Israel, the larger, and the other was Judah. The stories to follow will tell you all about them.

Every now and then, during all these hundreds of years, we see men appear, filled with the power of God and trying their best to stem the tide of evil. One tells the people—do you know who?—that it will be a bad thing for them to have a king, but they just *will* have a king in spite of everything. Another tells them there should be no division in the kingdom, and they pay no heed to him. Others warn the kings against doing certain things, all to no purpose. For king and people alike will go their own headlong way.

Do you know who these men are, what they are called? They were such men as Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and Daniel—prophets of the Lord.

It all looks very much as if some One was working out a plan with these people—does it not? It is as if some Person were trying, as we say, to whip them into line for a particular purpose. For now one man is chosen from among

all the men in the world to found a nation. And that nation, when it is founded, is hedged in, so to speak, all ways, so as to keep it, if possible, on the Great Highway. They are warned against doing this and urged to do that, by special messengers. And then, when it appears out of the question to keep the *whole* nation on the Great Highway, a part of it is chosen, and afterwards hedged in and warned and taught.

For what purpose, do you think?

For this purpose—That the Christ might come into the world and that the world might be prepared in some way for His coming.

So, in the stories that you are to read in this book, it will be a good thing for you to keep in mind that thought, if you can, to see how things are shaped by the unseen hand of God.

Chapter II

WHEN THINGS AND PEOPLE BEGAN

If you could suspend an orange from your hand by a string and then take away the string, leaving the orange in the air, you would have a picture, a bird's-eye view, of the earth on which we live hanging in space without anything that we can see to hold it up.

It would be an easy matter after that for you to imagine people and animal and things on the orange about as you find them on our earth. There would be hills and mountains, valleys and plains, rivers and lakes and oceans, grass and flowers and trees, and all kinds of animals, both wild and tame. There would of course be men and women and children, all going about their work and school and play. There would be miles upon miles of air in every direction, with a clear sky inlaid with stars of various sizes twinkling away in the distant blue and with the light, say, of another orange, a tremendously big orange, shining upon it through those miles of space. And then, to make the picture complete, you would have to imagine the orange doing

two things—twirling round and round and at the same time making wide sweeps through space about the point where your hand had been as the center.

It is all very beautiful and very wonderful, this earth of ours hanging in space on nothing and going through those two motions, the land and water, the people and animals, its carpet of green in the springtime and of purple and gold in the autumn and of pure white in the winter, all staying firmly on this rolling ball just as if it were stationary in the atmosphere!

And yet there was a time when, if you could see the place where the earth is now, nothing but shapeless dark mists appeared, and everything so night-black you could not hope to see through them or even into them. How is it that this great change came about, do you think? God brought it about by the power of His word.

It happened "in the beginning," the Bible tells us—the beginning, that is to say, of this earth on which we dwell. For whenever the Good Book speaks of the beginning, that is what it means—the time when things and people on this earth began to be.

Well, then, in the beginning God created the

heavens and the earth—just how we do not know. The earth was without form or shape, like the air when it is filled with heavy mist. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, amid the darkness that was everywhere. At this time we were all in the spirit world, waiting anxiously for the earth to be created, so that we might come down here to be born in the flesh and to make our home.

God said, "Let there be light!" For, you know, that is the very first thing necessary if one is to do any good work. And there was light. And God divided the light from the darkness.

After that He said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters!" So the waters were parted, and the firmament, or the heavens, appeared:

Then God said, "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together in one place, and let the dry land appear!" And it was so. God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of the waters called He seas.

And God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, and herbs, and seed-bearing trees!" And

it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herbs, and seed-bearing trees.

Then God said, "Let there be lights in the sky to mark the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons, for days and years!" And it was so. He made two lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. And these all He set in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness.

After that God said, "Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and the fowl that it may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven!" God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, each after its kind, and every winged fowl after its kind.

And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters of the seas, and let the fowl multiply in the earth."

And God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creatures—cattle, and creeping things, and the beasts of the earth!" And it was so.

For God made the beasts, and the cattle, and the creeping things.

Last of all, God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth!" And God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him, male and female created He them.

God blessed them and said unto them, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

Moreover, God said to man, "I have given you every herb and every tree—to you it shall be for food, as also to every beast of the earth, and every fowl of the air, and everything that creepeth upon the earth."

And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished. And when everything was finished, God rested from all His work which He had made, and ordained the Sabbath, because He had ended His work.

Chapter III

A GREAT AMERICAN GARDEN

Do you know where it was that the first man and woman lived after they were created? Perhaps, though, you have heard already. It was in what we now call America! Very pleasant it is to think that the land to which millions of eyes in the Old World have turned in hope, and to which millions of feet have come for freedom, is after all the "cradle of the race."

The Bible does not tell us this, however, but we are so informed in one of the revelations the Lord gave to the Prophet Joseph Smith. In Missouri, we are told, is a locality which has come to be known among the Latter-day Saints as Adam-ondi-Ahman, because it is "the place where Adam dwelt." And here and in this neighborhood all the things happened of which you are to read in this chapter and one or two other chapters that are to follow. Only, in those days all the land was in one place and the waters in another, instead of being divided as at present.

It must have been a lovely place, that vast

garden, for God himself, the Good Book tells us, "planted it eastward in Eden." And its climate was very mild, as we may believe, since the first man and woman wore no clothes. In this respect they were like little children, as also in their entire innocence of good and evil thoughts and deeds. There were trees and underbrush in wild profusion, with a thick carpet of green grass, sprinkled plentifully with flowers of many colors. There were all kinds of animals, too, not glaring at one another from out the heavy foliage in ferocious hunger, for then all of them fed on vegetation, but rather they mingled with one another in the utmost peace. And then, besides, meandering in and out of the deep shadows of the place into the sunshine was a clear stream to water the garden.

Here, as we said, the first human pair lived, eating fruit and vegetables fresh from the stem. The man's name was Adam; the woman's, Eve.

One of the first things Adam was asked to do was to name "every beast of the field and every fowl of the air," as these were "brought" before him for this purpose by the Lord. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the

air, and to every beast of the field. This, we should say, was before Eve was given him to be "an help meet for him."

But Adam and Eve had their troubles even in this beautiful place, where, one would think, no trouble could ever show its face.

It seems that there was a third person in the garden. This was no less a person than Lucifer, the Son of the Morning, whom we have come to know as Satan. We know now that Satan was a spirit that existed in heaven before man dwelt on the earth and before the earth was made. And we know also that he disputed with Christ in the life before this over how man and the earth were to be redeemed. He wanted to force people to be good, but Jesus wished man to be allowed his freedom to choose for himself. Well, Satan was here in the garden, to see what harm he could do. And, true to his nature, he entered the body of the serpent, through whose mouth he spoke.

Now, in the midst of the garden was a tree, of whose fruit Adam and Eve were forbidden to partake. It was known as the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Said the Lord to Adam, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest

freely eat, except the Tree of Knowledge. In the day thou eatest of that tree thou shalt surely die."

Here was Satan's opportunity.

"Has God said that you may eat of every tree in the garden?" the serpent asked guilefully of Eve one time.

"Every tree but one," she answered.

"And what tree is that?" inquired the serpent.

"The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil," she answered innocently. "If we eat of its fruit," Eve went on, "we shall die."

"You shall *not* die!" said the serpent. "On the contrary, you shall become as gods, knowing good and evil. Look at the tree. Is it not pleasant to the eyes? Its fruit will make you wise. Eat it and see for yourself."

Eve looked at the tree, and saw that it was very beautiful. She looked at the fruit, and thought how desirable it was to be wise, to know both good and evil. So she partook of it, and, running to her husband, offered some to him.

But Adam had to think about the matter before he disobeyed a commandment of the Lord

—which is always a good thing to do. His thoughts must have run something like this:

Clearly, Eve had been deceived by Satan in the guise of a serpent. She had broken a command of God. Now, as every act of disobedience to God's law is punished, one way or another, Eve would suffer for her deed. In what way? First, by being driven out of the garden, and then by falling asleep in death after a while. Meantime, Adam would be left alone in the garden, and his life would go on for ever and ever that way.

But the Lord had also given them a commandment to have children and raise a family, and this commandment had been given *before* the other about not partaking of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. What about that? It too could not be kept if Adam and his wife were separated.

So, looking the whole situation in the face, Adam decided to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge offered him by his wife.

Then swift and sure the dreaded punishment followed the transgression. Sorrow should come to the woman in her bringing up of children and to the man in his work of subduing the

earth, which should bring forth thorns and thistles. "In the sweat of thy face," said the Lord to Adam, "shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground."

And the Lord said, "Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil. Now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the Tree of Life, and eat, and live forever, let us send him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground." And this was done. The Lord drove out the man and his wife, and He placed at the east of the garden cherubim and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the Tree of Life. For if they had partaken of that now, they would have lived forever in their present condition of imperfection.

Chapter IV

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TWO BROTHERS, AND WHAT CAME OF IT

When Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden of Eden, Adam began to till the ground and to raise food for himself and his family. For children were born to them, both sons and daughters.

Also they called upon God for guidance under their new conditions in life. Nor was He slow to answer. He gave them commandments, that they should worship Him and offer up as a sacrifice to Him the firstlings of their flocks. And Adam and his wife did as they were commanded.

One time, as Adam was offering up a sacrifice to the Lord, an angel appeared to him. The angel said—

"Why doest thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord?"

Adam answered, "I do not know, except that He commanded me to do so."

Thereupon the angel explained that it was because Christ, the Lamb of God, was to come

in due time and offer Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of all mankind, and that Adam and Eve, with their children and all who were to follow them till then, should offer up sacrifices unto God so as to point their minds forward to that great event.

After that the Holy Ghost fell upon Adam and Eve, and they praised the Lord for the hope that had come to them in the message of the angel.

Adam said, "Blessed be the name of God, for, because of my transgression, my eyes are opened. In this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God!"

And Eve said, "Were it not for our transgression we should never have had children, and never should have known good and evil, the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God gives to all the obedient!"

The idea expressed by Adam and Eve in these passages is also beautifully put by Lehi, in the Book of Mormon. "Adam fell that man might be," he says, "and men are that they might have joy." And he explains further that "if Adam had not transgressed, he would not have fallen, but would have remained in the Garden of Eden,

and that all things would have remained as they were after they were created," and been that way forever and had no end.

Of course, our first parents taught their children what they themselves had learned about God, about good and evil, and about the redemption through our Savior who was to come into the world. But even then there was the power of Satan among men, the same Satan that had spoken to Eve through the mouth of the serpent, as well as the power of the Lord influencing men to do right. And Satan began to work with the children of Adam and Eve, to get them to disobey the teachings of their parents.

Two of these children were Cain and Abel. Cain was a farmer, and Abel was a shepherd.

Now, the Lord had commanded Adam, as we have seen, to offer "the firstlings of his flock" as a sacrifice to Him. "Firstlings" here most likely means "best," not those born first. Abel, who was a man of natural goodness, brought his offering as the Lord had commanded, and was accordingly accepted by Him. But Cain, whose mind turned as naturally to evil, took the fruit of the ground, and undoubtedly not the

best fruit, as a sacrifice, and was not accepted by the Lord. He had always given his parents trouble on account of his unbelief and bad conduct. "Who is the Lord that I should know Him?" he used to ask. And so Cain "loved Satan more than the Lord," but Abel hearkened to the Lord and kept His commandments.

When Cain saw that Abel's sacrifice had been accepted and that his own had not been, he was very angry.

"Why is thy countenance fallen?" the Lord asked him. "If thou doest well, thou shalt be accepted. And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. From this time forth thou shalt be the father of lies, and thou shalt be cursed—except thou repent."

But Cain did not repent. He went from bad to worse. He listened not any more to the voice of the Lord, to follow in His ways. Not only so. He formed a secret society so that its members might protect one another in wickedness. Adam and his wife mourned before the Lord, because of Cain and his brethren.

Also Cain was greedy, and coveted his brother's flocks. One day Cain went into the field and talked with Abel over some matters. While

there he slew Abel. And Cain gloried in what he had done. "I am free!" he said. "The flocks of my brother falleth into my hands!"

Thus Cain became the first murderer—a distinction that none of us will be inclined to envy him.

The Lord said to Cain after the murder, "Where is Abel, thy brother?"

Cain said in reply, "I know not! Am I my brother's keeper?"

The Lord said, "Cain, what hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood cries unto me from the ground. Now thou shalt be cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth."

Cain answered, "Satan tempted me because of my brother's flocks. And I was angry also, for his offering thou didst accept, and not mine. My punishment is greater than I can bear. Thou hast driven me this day from thy face, from which I shall be hid. I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth. And it shall come to pass, that he that findeth me will slay me because

of my iniquities, for these things are not hidden from the Lord."

"Whosoever slayeth thee," said the Lord, "vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold!"

So God set a mark on Cain, lest any one should kill him. He was shut out from God's presence. Later he, with his wife and many others, dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.

Chapter V

THE FIRST EMIGRANT SHIP

About two thousand years after our first parents were driven out of the Garden of Eden, people were very wicked—so wicked, in fact, that Noah expressed the wish that God had not created man in the first place. Every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually.

Adam, of course, was dead, long since. So, too, were Seth, his son, and Enos, his grandson, and Cainan, his great-grandson, and Mahalaleel, his great-great-grandson, as also was this last one's son Jared. But there were living, of this direct line from the first man, Methuselah, grandfather of Noah, and Lamech, father of Noah, and Noah himself.

People were extremely long-lived in those times. Then a man in his nineties, whom we regard now as very old, was looked on as a mere boy—as indeed he would be when compared with Adam, who lived to be nine hundred and thirty years of age, and Methuselah, the oldest man that ever lived, whose age when he died was

nine hundred and sixty-nine years! With that kind of lifetime think what a mere stripling a man would be to-day who had fought side by side with George Washington in the Revolutionary War! He would hardly be two hundred years old!

It was perhaps a good thing to live into the hundreds of years when the world was new, especially if you were at all inclined to learn and to profit by your experience. But think what a lot of mischief a person could do both to himself and to the world generally, if he had a bent the other way!

Most of the people in the time of Noah—nearly all of them, in fact—were thoroughly bad. So God said to Noah, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth—man, and beast, and creeping thing, and the fowls of the air, and I will do this in a hundred and twenty years, unless man repents."

But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

At this time Noah's family consisted of eight persons—himself, his wife, and his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, with their wives. Noah was a just man, we are told, and perfect in his generations, and he walked with God.

"Make thee an ark," said the Lord to Noah, "after a pattern which I will show thee. For I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven. Everything that is in the earth shall die. But with thee I will establish my covenant. Thou shalt come into the ark, thou and thy sons and thy wife and thy sons' wives, with every sort of animal, male and female, and food enough for thee and for them."

The ark was of gopher wood. It was about four hundred and fifty feet long, about seventy-five feet wide, and about forty-five feet high—not so large as one of our modern battleships or ocean liners, but a good-sized vessel none the less. It may have taken the entire hundred and twenty years to make it, for we may suppose that what with Noah preaching repentance and with the few to work on it, the building of a ship so large for those days was no small undertaking. At length, however, it was finished and ready for its voyage into the unknown.

Seven days before the time for the flood, the Lord gave some final instructions. Then Noah with his wife, his three sons, and the sons'

wives went into the ark, with all the animals and provisions, as directed.

Presently the waters began to pour in upon the earth. The fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. On from the seas and the rivers and down from the clouded sky came the ever-increasing floods of rain! Gradually, inch by inch and foot by foot, the water covered the earth, and gradually it lifted the ark from the ground, while the hills began to sink their heads under the moving seas, first the low ones and then the higher, till nothing could be seen on that vast and mighty ocean but the great, lone ark, with its heavy cargo of people and animals and food.

Of course every living creature—man and beast—was drowned in the fierce deluge, except those in the ark. One can easily picture the scene. The people were first astonished that Noah's prophecy was being fulfilled. Then they were overcome with terror, scrambling to the tops of houses and trees, or running like mad to the highest hills in the neighborhood, in the hope of escaping the fury of the flood. It must have been a sight to fill one with horror.

All this, you must bear in mind, took place in what is now known as America. For here is where man had his first home.

Meantime, the ark floated majestically on the bosom of the deep, driven, most likely, by the wind to where God wished it to go. That place, we know now, was somewhere in the Old World, as we call it. The ark lighted on a mount later called Ararat, in Armenia, which the Persians know as the "Mountain of Noah."

At the end of forty days, Noah opened the window of the ark, and sent out a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth. Also he sent forth a dove from him to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground. But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him in the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth. Then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark. And he stayed yet other seven days. And again he sent forth the dove out of the ark. And the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off.

So Noah knew that the waters were abated

from off the earth. And he stayed yet other seven days, and sent forth the dove, which returned not again unto him any more. Then Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry.

After that the people and the animals filed out of the vessel, which had been their home for so long, to get a fresh start in the world.

Chapter VI

A TOWER TO REACH TO HEAVEN

On leaving the ark, with his household and the animals, Noah built an altar, on which to offer sacrifices. He took of every clean beast and of every clean fowl and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, and upon all that moveth on the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea. Into your hands are they delivered."

Noah and his household were admonished not to commit murder, because God had made man in His own image. Said the Lord to Noah, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." Burnt offerings were to be continued. The flesh of animals was permitted as food, but the blood of them was forbidden, as being the life thereof.

And so once more the race was set on its feet for another trial. It was to be hoped they

would make a better success of it this time. At first, of course, there was a tendency to keep together for various reasons. But as time went on the earth's population was forced to spread out more and more. In a general way the earth was divided—the descendants of Shem taking what is now known as Asia, those of Ham the countries of Africa, and the descendants of Japheth the territory of Europe. We are able to trace the ancient Greeks, the Britons, and the Germans back to Japheth; the Jewish people to Shem; and the ancient Babylonians and the Egyptians to Ham.

As the new population of the world grew, there sprang up in the hearts of men a fear that the people might be destroyed a second time. And so they clung to the high places. As a matter of fact, however, God had made a covenant with Noah not to bring on another flood, and as a token of His promise He set the rainbow in the sky. But the people, on the whole, preferred to trust to their fears rather than to their faith.

It was not a great while, though, till the old divisions returned. Two classes arose. On the one hand, were those who, as the Bible fre-

quently puts it, loved God, and, on the other hand, others who loved Satan more than the Lord. Such men as the Brother of Jared, of whom we read in the Book of Mormon, led the former class. Nimrod, a grandson of Ham, led the other.

This man Nimrod, who is described as "a mighty hunter," was the first to lead the people down into the plains and to advise their keeping together instead of scattering abroad. The prophets, who spoke for the Lord, tried to induce the people to spread out over the country. Nimrod said to the people, "That is only a way the priests have of holding you in their power. Do not do it. You keep together. I will find a means of preventing the Lord from destroying us in another flood. We will build a tower high enough to be a safe refuge to all who will trust in it. For, after all, it is by our own wisdom and energy and power that we succeed in life, and not through any favor of God, as those men would have us think."

Thus, by making the people believe he was their friend and by flattering their vanity, as has often been done since then by smaller men, Nimrod established a government that was nothing

short of a tyranny. And all the time the people as a whole thought they were in the hands of their friends!

So the whole population, nearly, busied themselves with erecting that Tower of Folly on the Plains of Shinar, in what later came to be called Babylonia. They said one to another, "Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, "Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven, and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." They worked on this building day in and day out, year in and year out, till it was an imposing structure, higher than it looked from a distance, on account of its great breadth.

But God had more knowledge and power than the boastful Nimrod and his foolish people had imagined. At this time the whole earth was of one language and of one speech. The thing to do, therefore, was to confound their language, so that they could not understand one another. And this God did. After that there were as many languages as there were people. Now,

since you cannot get very far with mere gestures, especially when there is no general agreement as to just what the various gestures shall mean, the builders of that tower were hard put to it to go on with their work. So they had to give up. Besides, the thing had put a great scare into their hearts, just as the Flood had done into the hearts of others. And then, to cap the climax, they were scattered abroad on all the face of the earth—being compelled to do what they could not be persuaded to do by the prophets.

The speech of some of them, however, was not confounded. Among this people was a man by the name of Jared, with his brother, whose name was Moriancumer. They were men of God. In the general confusion Moriancumer, at Jared's request, prayed that their language and that of their families and some of their friends might not be confounded. This request was granted. Then he prayed that, if they were to be scattered, the Lord would lead them to a choice land. And this prayer also was granted. The Lord led them to what we know as America, where they founded the Jaredite nation.

In memory of this strange event the names "babel" and "Babylon," which mean "con-

fusion," have come down in history to our own day. Coupled with the idea of confusion should be the idea that it is folly to defy God.

Chapter VII

"AND THERE WERE GIANTS IN THOSE DAYS"

Once upon a time there was a young man who lived in the land of the Chaldeans. It was some thousands of years ago—if you can tell how long that is.

One day the priest, a pagan priest, one of those who worshiped the sun, laid hands on this young man to offer him up as a sacrifice to that queer god. Think of it—offering a human being as a sacrifice, instead of a sheep or an ox! But that was very common in Chaldea as in Egypt those days. The king, who was also a sun-worshiper, had lately sacrificed a little child in this way, and also three young girls, because these latter would not bow down and worship those ridiculous gods of wood and stone, and the natural objects. And so the priest of Pharaoh, in Chaldea, sought to do the same thing to this young man, and for much the same reason. He was bound hand and foot and laid on an altar resembling a bedstead, which is pictured for us by Abraham in a drawing.

Now, this youth was exceptional, not only for his own time, but for any time. For one thing, he longed to have the true priesthood, which his father and his grandfather and others back to Adam had held. Especially did he wish for this priesthood now that his father had turned to the worship of idols, as almost every one else had done. And then, for another thing, he yearned for a life of righteousness and a nearness to God, a real God, one who had all power and knowledge and goodness. This, it seems, was the true reason why the priest of Pharaoh wanted to get rid of him.

As the young man lay there on that altar and the wicked priest had the sharp, shining blade uplifted ready to plunge it into his heart, he prayed to the Lord that something might happen to save his life. And something did happen. For, all of a sudden, his bands were loosed, the altar was broken down, and the murderous priest fell to the ground dead! "Behold," the Lord said to the young man, "I will lead thee by my hand, and I will take thee, to put upon thee my name, even the priesthood of thy father, and my power shall be over thee."

Thereupon, as you may be sure, he left

Chaldea and went, with his wife, who was a very beautiful young woman, and one of his nephews, to what is called nowadays the land of Palestine. And he was the more ready to do this because the Lord had commanded him in the matter. This land, the Lord said, should be his and his posterity's forever, as an everlasting inheritance.

From that time on great things happened in the young man's life, so as to prepare him not only for his work in the world, but also for his return to the land where he had lived as a boy, where he could teach the people correct ways of thinking and living. And this preparation he got direct from the Lord through revelation and visions and the urim and thummim.

"I am the Lord thy God," it was stated in one of these revelations. "I dwell in heaven. The earth is my footstool. I stretch my hand over the sea, and it obeys my voice. I cause the wind and the fire to be my chariot. I say to the mountains, 'Depart hence!' and, behold, they are taken away by the whirlwind, in an instant, suddenly. I will bless thee above measure, and make thy name great among the nations."

He learned about God—that He is a person,

in the same form that man has. He learned about the gospel—that Christ was to redeem mankind from eternal death. He learned about the life before this—that all men existed as spirits there and that some of them, those whom God would later make rulers, were greater than the rest. "Thou wast one of them," said the Lord to him. Also he learned a great deal about astronomy. Thus, after many years of this kind of study, he became the most learned man of his times.

Then he went back to his former home.

There, instead of being in danger of his very life, he was received with open arms by all classes. First of all, he was received gladly by the priests in their places of worship. There were many of these, and they were not on very good terms with one another. But they all were anxious to converse with the learned stranger on astronomy and religion. His way of explaining things impressed the priests very much, for he was able to show them that they were wrong on many points in both of these branches of learning. Not only the priests, but the princes and the king himself received him. There is a drawing, made by this scholar him-

self, showing him in the act of instructing these royal personages. From this visit to Egypt came a higher knowledge on the part of the Egyptians of religion and astronomy, but especially of astronomy, in which they later excelled all the nations of their time.

There was one thing that is very strange in the life of this good man. It is this: The Lord told him from time to time that He would make of him a great nation, when as a matter of fact he did not even have a child. But this promise, too, came true, as all the others had done. For, in his old age, he had not one son only, but two sons, and each of them founded a nation—the Israelites and the Ishmaelites. The former became the Jews, and the latter the Arabians.

Do you know who this man was? His name was Abraham. And can you tell in what respect he was one of the giants of those days? That we shall leave you to find out.

Chapter VIII

WHO IS THE RICH MAN?

This is a story of two rich men, one richer than the other, whose herdmen fell to quarreling and thus brought out in bold relief the character of both. One was Abraham, and one was Lot. See now if, at the end of the story, you can tell which is which.

The two men were conversing together. Both Abraham and Lot had flocks and herds and tents, so many, in fact, that "the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together." And so "there was strife between the herdmen of Abraham's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle."

Said one of the men: "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen, for we are brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me. If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right. Or, if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left."

Thereupon the other man "lifted up his eyes

and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, even as the garden of the Lord, or like the land of Egypt" along the rich bottoms of the Nile.

So the two men parted company, each with his herds and flocks and tents and servants, the one staying where he was, and the other, following the look of his eyes, going into the well watered plain of the river.

Can you tell now which was Lot and which was Abraham? May be what comes afterwards will help you a little, for always acts are followed by consequences.

Very soon after this the Lord appeared to one of these men, the one who stayed where he was, and said to him, evidently because He was pleased with what he had done in the matter of division—

"Lift up now thine eyes and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward and eastward and westward. All the land which thou seeest, to thee will I give it and to thy children forever. And I will make thy children as the dust of the earth, so that, if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy posterity also be numbered. Arise and walk through

the land in the length of it, and in the breadth of it, for I will give it unto thee."

Such was the reward of a good deed in kind, although this man had no thoughts of earthly reward in his heart. He was even richer in soul than in purse.

But what about the other—the one that lusted after the well watered plain, that followed the greed of his eyes?

He went, as we said, into the well watered plain of the Jordan, with his household and his household goods. Now, it happened that here were two cities about which you may have heard or read—the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. They were wicked cities, ruled by wicked kings. The man may not have known this, however, for sometimes things are not what they seem. You can almost tell beforehand that his life would not be such as he thought it would be from the look of the country. Which is often the case. For, instead of having the peace and contentment that a well watered plain might be expected to give, he had little else than troubles, which came fast on one another's heels.

One time, the kings in that region got to

fighting, as kings will, you know,—five kings against four. And when the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, as they fled from the enemy, fell into some slimepits, their opponents gained an advantage. So the two cities of the plains were taken, with all that was in them. And this man, the one who had gone there to find peace and riches—he was taken, too, by the greedy conquerors, with all his people and goods!

The other man, however, the man who stayed where he was, heard what had happened to his friend. Post-haste he armed his servants, three hundred and eighteen in number, and hurried after the robber-kings. And presently he overtook them and rescued his friend, with his women-folk, his servants, and his property. Nor would he take any of the spoils for his reward, as he was expected to do, being altogether too independent and high-minded. "If I do that," he said, "those kings will say, 'We have made him rich!' "

Afterwards more troubles came to this man who had made his home on the plains.

The wickedness of these Cities of the Plains was so great that the Lord determined to destroy them. This fact He made known to the man

who had rescued his friend from the hands of those thieving kings. This man's big heart went out to the people living there, for he did not know how really wicked they were. And so he said to the Lord, "If there be fifty righteous found in the city of Sodom, wilt thou not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein?" And the Lord said that He would do so. This number was reduced to forty-five, then to thirty, after that to twenty, and finally to ten. The Lord said He would spare the city if only ten righteous could be found there. But they could not be found.

Only four righteous were found in Sodom—the friend of the man who had pleaded for the cities, with his wife and two daughters.

"Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire out of heaven. And He overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground."

And so it was that the man who had moved to the well watered plain of the Jordan to increase his possessions and find peace, lost all he had to begin with. "And the sun was risen upon the earth" when this man, escaping from

the burning towns, entered into Zoar. But the other man, whose least thought was of property, found both increase of goods, and peace.

Yes; you are correct—the man who stayed was Abraham, and the man who went away was Lot.

Chapter IX

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE GIRL AT THE WELL

Abraham, as you know, lived during the later years of his life in what is now called Palestine. There he died, and was buried in a grave bought with his own money.

But before he died, as you also know, a son was born to him and his wife Sarah—a child of promise, through whom in time he was to become the father of a great nation. This son's name was Isaac.

Now, since so much depended on Isaac, Abraham decided that he should marry a girl from among his own kindred. It would never do, you know, for him to marry one from among the heathen around him, for if he did, the purposes of the Lord concerning him might be frustrated.

So Abraham, after pledging one of his servants by an oath to be faithful, sent this servant to the home of his brother Nahor to get a wife for Isaac. What happened, you shall hear

mostly in the beautiful language of the Good Book itself.

On approaching the city, the servant made his camels kneel down by a well while he prayed. For it seems that he believed marriage to be such an important thing as to need divine guidance.

"O Lord God of my master Abraham," he prayed, "send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master. I stand here by the well, and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water. Let it come to pass that the damsel to whom I shall say, 'Let down the pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink,' and she shall say, 'Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also'—let it be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac."

Before he had done speaking, Rebekah came out to where he was, to draw water from the well, with her pitcher on her shoulder. The damsel was very fair to look upon. She went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up.

The servant ran to meet her, and said, "Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher."

And she said, "Drink, my lord." She hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and

gave him drink. And when she had done giving him drink, she said, "I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking." And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all the camels.

As the camels had done drinking, the man took a golden earring and two bracelets and put them on Rebekah, and said,

"Whose daughter art thou? Is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in?"

"I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor," she said. "Moreover, we have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in."

And the two went to the home of Rebekah, after the servant had bowed down and thanked the Lord for leading him to the house of his master's brethren and blessing his errand.

Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban. She ran and told her mother's house, and Laban, of these things. Laban, on his part, went out to meet Abraham's servant, and said,

"Come in, thou blessed of the Lord. Wherefore standest thou without? For I have prepared the house, and room for the camels."

And the man came into the house. He ungirded his camels, gave straw and provender to them, and washed his feet. There was set meat before him to eat. But he said, "I will not eat until I have told mine errand."

Laban and the rest listened to the servant's story—how Abraham had sent him to the land of his brethren, how he had prayed by the well, and how Rebekah had come and given him water for himself and the camels.

Then Laban and Bethuel answered, "The thing proceedeth from the Lord. Behold, Rebekah is before thee. Take her, and go, and let her be thy master's wife, as the Lord hath spoken."

Abraham's servant brought forth jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah. He gave also to her brother and her mother precious things. And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with him, and tarried all night. And they rose up in the morning, and he said, "Send me away unto my master."

They called Rebekah and said, "Wilt thou go with this man?"

And she said, "I will go."

They blessed Rebekah, saying, "Thou art our sister. Be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy posterity possess the gate of those who hate them!"

Rebekah and her damsels rode upon the camels, and followed the man.

Isaac went out to meditate in the field at eventide, and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and behold, the camels were coming.

And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. For she had said unto the servant, "What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us?" And the servant had said, "It is my master." Therefore she took a veil and covered herself.

The servant told Isaac all things that he had done. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife.

Chapter X

THE MAN WHO WRESTLED WITH AN ANGEL

People do not have to be born for the Lord to know them. The Lord knew them in the spirit world, before they were born into this life, and He set some of them apart to do His work here.

That is how it happened that God told Rebekah, the wife of Isaac, that she should have twin sons and that the one born first should serve the one born second. Rebekah never forgot this revelation to her. When they came, which they did when Isaac was sixty years old, they were named Esau and Jacob.

No two brothers, not to say twin brothers, could be more different in looks and actions than Esau and Jacob.

Even from infancy Esau was "red, all over like an hairy garment." Jacob, we may suppose, looked much like other boys when they are born. As they grew up, Esau became "a cunning hunter, a man of the field;" Jacob, "a plain man, dwelling in tents." That is, the one

followed the chase and lived a roving life, and the other preferred the quiet ways of the farm and the flocks. Again, Jacob seems to have been inclined to follow the ideas and teachings of his parents and grandparents, to keep close to the God of his father Isaac and his grandfather Abraham, as indeed we would expect him to do after what the Lord had told his mother before his birth. Esau, on the contrary, lived his own life, without regard generally to his parents' wishes, as when he married into a family of unbelievers against their desire and once when hungry he sold his birthright to Jacob for a mess of pottage. And as we might expect, too, the descendants of these two men widened their course, like a stream that has divided itself at its head.

We shall dismiss Esau now with the statement that he founded the nation of Edomites—a people that faded out of history hundreds of years ago. God chose Jacob, his brother, to continue the work of Abraham, and so we shall follow his fortunes.

When it came time for Jacob to marry, his father said to him, "Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padan-

aram, to the house of Bethuel, thy mother's father, and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban, thy mother's brother. And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people, and give thee the blessing of Abraham, that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham."

Jacob did as his father requested. He went to Paden-aram, to the house of Laban, his mother's brother. (See Appendix.)

Before he went, however, he received a blessing from his father: "God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn. Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee. Be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee. Blessed be he that blesseth thee."

When he came to Haran, he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set. And he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep.

He dreamed. Behold, a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven.

Angels of God descended and ascended on it. And the Lord stood above it, and said,

"I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father and the God of Isaac. The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy posterity, who shall be as the dust of the earth. They shall spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south. And in thee and in them shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land. For I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."

Jacob waked out of his sleep. "Surely," he said, "the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way, that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I may come again to my father's house, then shall the Lord be my God! And of all that He shall give me I will surely give a tenth unto Him."

Then Jacob went on his journey.

At the house of Laban he married, and worked, and increased in wealth. Twenty years he stayed there in all, serving Laban, his uncle.

And then he left for the land of his birth. He was now rich, rich by his own effort and not by inheritance, for although he had bought Esau's birthright, he had not taken any of the property of his father's which should have gone with that birthright. With it also went the acknowledged right to stand at the head of his father's household.

On his way thither he stopped one time, after sending his family and his servants and his cattle over a brook, and was left alone. And there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.

The man said, "Let me go, for the day breaketh."

Jacob answered, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me!"

"What is thy name?" asked the man.

He said, "Jacob."

"Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel. For as a prince thou hast power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."

Jacob called the name of the place Penial, for,

he said, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved!"

This explains why the posterity of Jacob are often called "Israelites" and the "Children of Israel."

On another occasion God appeared to Jacob, and renewed to him the blessing of his father Isaac and his grandfather Abraham. "Be fruitful and multiply," the Lord told him; "a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins. The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee will I give it, and to thy posterity after thee forever."

The place where God spake to him Jacob called "Bethel."

Thus Jacob received a fulfilment of the promise made to him in that dream of the ladder reaching to heaven with angels ascending and descending on it. He was blessed of the Lord, he did in fact return to his native land, and God did in reality become his God. Also he lived to see his father Isaac again in the flesh.

Jacob had twelve sons—of whom we shall hear something presently.

Chapter XI

THE BOY WHO HAD DREAMS

One of the twelve sons of Jacob was named Joseph. He was the oldest child of Rachel, and the eleventh son of his father. When the Bible first speaks of Joseph, he is seventeen years old.

Now Jacob loved Joseph more than all his other children, because he was the son of his old age, we are told, and as a token of his love put on him a tunic such as only princes and persons of distinction wore in those days. The Bible calls it "a coat of many colors."

This mark of favoritism for Joseph on the part of Jacob made the boy's brothers envy him and hate him. They disliked him so much that they would not offer him the customary salutation of the East, "Peace be unto thee!" And then, too, once when Joseph was feeding the flock with his brothers, he brought to his father their evil report. Probably, also, they understood from the giving of that tunic to Joseph that their father meant to have him exercise the rights of the first-born.

Another thing that made the brothers hate

him even more was two dreams that he had, which he seems to have related to the family.

"We were binding sheaves in the field," was one of them, "and, lo, my sheaf arose and stood upright, and, behold, your sheaves stood round about and made obeisance to my sheaf." Another was to the effect that "the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me."

Not only were the brothers scornful over these dreams, but even the father took occasion to reprove his son. "Shall I and thy mother and thy brothers," he asked, "come to bow down to thee to the earth?" Nevertheless, while the brothers envied and hated him, Jacob observed the saying.

"Come," said his father one day to Joseph—"come, and I will send thee unto thy brothers. Do they not feed the flock in Shechem?"

"Here am I!" answered Joseph obediently.

"Go, I pray thee," continued Jacob, "see whether it be well with thy brothers, and well with the flocks, and bring me word again."

Jacob at the time was living in a place called Hebron, about fifty miles from Shechem as the crow flies.

So Joseph, taking his courage in his hand, went alone to Shechem. A certain man found him, and, behold, he was wandering in the field.

"What seekest thou?" asked the man.

"My brothers," answered Joseph.

"They are departed hence," the man said. "I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.' "

So Joseph went to Dothan, about twelve miles farther on, straight as the crow flies.

Dothan was a rich pasture-land with swelling hills, one of the most beautiful parts of Canaan.

When the brothers saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired to slay him. They said, "Behold, this dreamer cometh! Come now therefore, let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, 'Some evil beast hath devoured him.' Then we shall see what will come of his dreams!"

"Let us not slay him," Reuben pleaded. Reuben wanted to save Joseph alive, so that he could restore the lad to his father. "But let us rather cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness."

When, therefore, Joseph came up, the brothers stripped him of his coat of many colors, and

cast him into a pit. And this in spite of the pleadings of the boy and his anguish of soul.

This "pit" was really a well without water in it. The wells of that time were regularly built and plastered, narrow at the mouth, but widening as they descended, till at the bottom they sometimes measured a hundred feet in width. Into one of these the despised Joseph was lowered to die a miserable death.

Then the brothers sat down to eat.

Presently they lifted up their eyes, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt.

Said Judah to the rest, "What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh."

So Joseph was taken out of the pit and sold to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver.

When Reuben, who seems to have been away when this was done, returned to the well, Joseph was not there. He rent his clothes, after the manner of those times, to show his grief. Go-

ing to his brothers, he said, "The child is not! And I—whither shall I go?"

Killing a young goat, they took Joseph's tunic, dipped it in the blood, and afterwards carried it to their father, with the statement, "This we have found. Know now whether it be thy son's coat or no."

Jacob recognized it at once.

"It is my son's coat," he exclaimed in anguish. "An evil beast hath devoured him. Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces."

Poor deceived Jacob tore his clothes, put on sack-cloth, and mourned for his lost son many days.

His sons and daughters rose up to comfort him. But he refused to be comforted. "I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning!" he wept.

So far as Jacob and all the members of his family were concerned, this was the last of Joseph the Dreamer. But "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform"—as we shall see in the two lessons that are to follow.

Chapter XII

THE LEAN AND THE FAT KINE

Meanwhile, the Ishmeelites, with their camels loaded with spicery and balm and myrrh, wended their slow way through Palestine into Egypt. There they sold, not only their sweet-smelling merchandise, but also the young man whom they had brought with them, the boy that had cost them but twenty pieces of silver.

The man who bought this lad was no less a person than an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian named Potipher.

God was with Joseph, and made him a prosperous man. His master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand. So Joseph found grace in his sight, and served him, and was made overseer over Potipher's house.

How long Joseph remained overseer, we do not know. At any rate, Joseph, who was by this time a handsome man, excited the ill will of Potipher's wife, but through no fault of his. She told her husband a falsehood about the young man, and got him dismissed and thrown

into prison, the prison where the men who offended the king were kept.

Here, too, God was with Joseph. Presently we find him in charge of all the prisoners, although a prisoner himself.

In the same dungeon with Joseph were the chief butler and the chief baker of the king, with both of whom Pharaoh was angry. As the king's birthday approached, these two men had dreams. The cupbearer dreamed that he squeezed the juice of some grapes on a three-branched vine into a cup and handed it to the king. The baker dreamed that he had on his head three baskets, one on top of another, and that out of the uppermost the birds ate some bakemeats.

They asked Joseph to tell them what their dreams meant. And he did, through the Spirit of the Lord. The butler, he said, in three days should be restored to his place before the king. But the baker should in the same time be executed.

"But," said Joseph to the butler before his release, "think on me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make remembrance of me unto Pharaoh, and

bring me out of this house. For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews. And here also I have done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon."

Yet, when the one was restored and the other put to death, did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him.

In two years from this time Pharaoh himself had a dream. It was to this effect: There came up out of the Nile river seven well favored kine and fatfleshed. And they fed in the meadow. Seven other kine came up after them out of the river, and stood by the other kine upon the brink of the river. And the ill favored and leanfleshed kine ate up the seven well favored and fat kine.

So Pharaoh awoke. And he slept and dreamed the second time. Seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank and good. And, behold, seven thin ears and blasted with the east wind sprung up after them. The seven thin ears devoured the seven rank and full ears.

And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, it was a dream.

In the morning his spirit was troubled. He called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the

wise men thereof, and told them his dream. But there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh.

Then the chief butler remembered Joseph. He told the king of the dreams that he and the chief baker had in the prison and of Joseph's interpretation of them. Joseph was sent for. They brought him hastily out of the dungeon. He shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh.

Pharaoh said unto Joseph, "I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it. I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it."

Joseph answered Pharaoh, "It is not in me. God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace."

Then the king told Joseph the dream.

When he had finished, Joseph said: "The dream is one. God hath showed Pharaoh what He is about to do. The seven good kine are seven years, and the seven good ears are seven years. And the seven thin and ill favored kine that came up after them are seven years, and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be seven years of famine.

"This is the thing which I have spoken unto

Pharaoh. What God is about to do He showeth unto Pharaoh. There come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt. And there shall arise after them seven years of famine, and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt, and famine shall consume the land. That famine shall be very grievous. And it will shortly come to pass.

"Let Pharaoh do this: Let him look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. And let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. Let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt, that the land perish not through the famine."

The thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh. He said to his servants, "Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?"

To Joseph he said, "God hath showed thee all this. There is none so discreet as thou art. Thou shalt be over my house. According to

thy word shall all my people be ruled. Only in the throne will I be greater than thou. See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt!"

Pharaoh took off his ring and put it on Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck. And he made him to ride in a second chariot which he had. They cried before him, "Bow the knee!"

"I am Pharaoh," said the king to Joseph. "Without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt."

When this happened, Joseph was thirty years old.

Chapter XIII

THE SILVER CUP

Joseph, we are told, went out from the presence of the king to perform the great task assigned him as Pharaoh's chief officer.

In the seven years of plenty the earth brought forth by handfuls. All the food of these years he gathered and laid away in storehouses in the cities. He gathered grain as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering it, for it was without number.

Then the famine came.

It was truly grievous, as Joseph had prophesied it would be. The people cried to Pharaoh for bread, but he said to them, "Go to Joseph. What he saith to you, do." Not only in Egypt was the famine sore, but in other lands also. So it happened that people from other countries came to Egypt to buy grain of Joseph.

One day there came into Joseph's presence ten men. They bowed low before him. For was he not the governor of all Egypt?

Now, Joseph knew at once who these men were. They were his brothers—the men who

would have murdered him and who had sold him as a slave for twenty pieces of silver! As they bowed before him he remembered that dream of the upright sheaf and the other sheaves standing round about that one. But he did not let on that he knew. He spoke roughly to them.

"Whence come ye?"

They answered, "From the land of Canaan to buy food."

"Ye are spies!" he said. "To see the nakedness of the land are ye come!"

"Nay, nay, my lord," they protested, "but to buy food are thy servants come. We are true men. Thy servants are no spies. We are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan. The youngest is this day with our father, and one is not."

"Hereby ye shall be proved," Joseph told them. "By the life of Pharaoh, ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither! Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you."

And he put them in jail three days.

On the third day Joseph called the brothers

before him, and said, "If ye be true men, let one of you be bound in prison, while the others go with grain for your houses. But bring your youngest brother to me."

The brothers talked together in their own tongue, not knowing that Joseph could understand them, for he always addressed them through an interpreter.

One said, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear. Therefore is this distress come upon us."

And Reuben answered, "Spake I not unto you, saying, 'Do not sin against the child,' and ye would not hear?"

Joseph turned himself about from them, and wept, and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.

The other nine left for home, their donkeys loaded with grain.

Time went on, and they returned to Egypt, the nine brothers, bringing with them Benjamin, full brother to Joseph.

When Joseph saw that Benjamin was with them, he requested the ruler of his house to bring

the eleven brothers in to dinner. This invitation surprised and frightened them very much. They did not know how to take it. Now it happened that Joseph had ordered every man's money to be placed in the mouth of his sack. Might it not be that the invitation to the dinner party had something to do with this fact?

"Is your father well?" Joseph asked—"the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?"

Bowing low, they answered, "Thy servant, our father, is in good health—he is alive."

"Is this your youngest brother?" he asked, when he saw Benjamin. And to Benjamin, "God be gracious unto thee, my son!"

Joseph made haste, and sought where to weep. He entered into his chamber, and wept there. And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, "Set on bread."

There was a great feast, but Benjamin's portion was five times greater than any one else's.

And the brothers wondered.

Again the sacks were filled, again the money was put in the mouths of the sacks—for the brothers had brought a double amount to make up for the first time—and again, as the morning

light was breaking, the brothers betook themselves to the road home.

"Up!" cried Joseph to his steward—"up, follow after the men!"

Joseph told him what to say, when he should have overtaken them.

"Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good?" he asked when he had caught up with them. "Why have ye stolen my master's silver cup?"

They denied having stolen anything. "With whomsoever it be found," they said, "let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen."

A search was made, and the missing cup was found in Benjamin's sack!

Sad at heart, and humiliated, all the men returned to Joseph.

"What shall we say unto my lord?" Judah said. "What shall we speak, or how shall we clear ourselves?"

Joseph pretended to be angry. "The man with whom the cup was found, he shall be my servant. As for you, get up in peace unto your father."

Then Judah came near to Joseph and made a wonderful plea for Benjamin. He told of Jacob's love for Joseph, of his grief over the loss of him,

of the old man's love for Benjamin, of his feeble condition, and of how it would kill him to know that he had now lost a second son.

Joseph could hold himself in no longer. He demanded that every one leave the room, except the brothers. Then he made himself known to them. "I am Joseph," he said. "Doth my father live?" He wept aloud.

They were so stunned by the statement and so overcome with fear of him, that no one could answer.

"Come near to me, I pray you," Joseph said.

They drew near.

"I am Joseph, your brother," he repeated, "whom ye sold into Egypt. Be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither. For God did send me, to preserve you a posterity in the earth. There be five years more of famine. Go up to my father and say, 'Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt. Come down unto me. Tarry not. And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen.' "

He fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept, and Benjamin wept upon his neck. For Benjamin was his full brother, his mother

Rachel's second son. Moreover he kissed all his half-brothers, and wept upon them.

Then the brothers went home and told their father what had happened. Thereupon they and he, with all their families and property, went down to Egypt.

And the Children of Israel made their home in the land of Goshen.

Chapter XIV

IN THE PALACE OF THE KING

An Egyptian princess, accompanied by her maids, went from her palace one time to bathe in the river Nile. As she pushed her way through the tall bulrushes that lined its banks just there, what should she see right in front of her but a live baby, tucked away ever so neatly in a basket made of rushes!

"Oh," she exclaimed, giving a little start. "Take the baby out, won't you?" To her maids she said this, you understand.

The maids hurried to do her bidding. One of them went out a little way into the water, set her hand to the small boat, and pulled it to the shore, where the princess was waiting.

That queer little cradle was made of bulrushes, its spaces so plastered with slime and pitch that the water could not get through at all to wet the child.

If a young lady nowadays, whether she was a princess or just an untitled girl, should see a sight like that, she would be hard put to it to account for a thing so strange. But not so the

princess in the house of the great and powerful Pharaohs of Egypt. All she said was, "This is one of the Hebrew's children!" And that explained everything.

You see, the Hebrew people were now practically a nation of slaves in a land where one of their ancestors, the wonderful Joseph, was all but king. They had come to Egypt, as you already know, with Jacob, the father of Joseph, when they were few in numbers.

That was many, many years ago. Pharaoh the king had been glad to receive them for Joseph's sake, and had set apart the land of Goshen, down there by the delta of the great river, for their sole use and home. And there they had lived and grown and prospered, till something happened to change their lot in life. Meantime, not only Jacob, but Joseph also, died, and a new line of kings had arisen in Egypt that "knew not Joseph."

One of these kings, the present pharaoh and father of the princess of our story, had grown restless on account of the Israelites.

"Look here," he said one day to his princes and other men about him, "these Israelites now number more than we do! Think of it—

enough foreigners among us to overturn our government, or, at least, if they should join our enemies, to change it! Something must be done!"

And something was done. The king ordered two women doctors among the Hebrews, called midwives, actually to kill all the boy babies as soon as they were born! But the two women feared God more than they did the king, and so the boy babies lived on like the girl babies. Then the two midwives were hailed before the king, who wanted to know why they had not done as they were told. They made him an explanation that looked perfectly good, for they were shrewd women, those midwives, and so were let off without any punishment.

But the king nevertheless felt that the Hebrew women could not be depended upon to kill their own children! So he ordered the Egyptians, his own people, to do this work of wickedness for him. "Throw all the boy babies into the river as fast as they are born!" were his instructions to them. And we may suppose that they obeyed him without question.

That is how it came about that the Egyptian princess was not particularly surprised when she

saw a child in the river, although she may have been somewhat astonished to see it alive and in so comfortable a situation.

On her taking it out of its little boat-cradle, it cried so pitifully that it went to her heart to put it back in the water. So she tried to think what to do with it. And while she was doing that, a young girl came up all of a sudden, as if by accident, and said—

"Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?"

And Pharaoh's daughter said, "Go."

Now, who do you suppose that little girl was? She was no other than that baby's sister! And you can probably guess that she went straight to her mother with the wonderful news that the princess wanted her as a nurse. Her name was Miriam, the same as our "Mary." When she had brought her own mother to the river side, the princess said—

"Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages."

And so this wise mother got money for saving her own baby and taking care of it in the bargain!

And the child grew, and the mother brought it to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses, because she had taken him out of the water.

In the palace of the king Moses was looked upon as a very promising child.

First of all, he was unusually beautiful. At the age of three, even, he was tall beyond his years, and so striking in appearance that people, as he passed along the streets, would turn their heads to look at him a second time. And visitors at the palace liked to linger to gaze at him.

And then, too, he was remarkable in his mind. He learned, we are told, more quickly than could be expected in one of his years. For, you must remember, not only was he a descendant of the great Abraham, but the Lord had chosen him to do a great work in the earth among his people. So Moses became "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and mighty in words and deeds."

Chapter XV

THE BUSH THAT BURNED, BUT WAS NOT CONSUMED

Once on the hills of Midian, far away from the fruitful land of the Nile river, where our last story was set, there was a shepherd tending his flock. As a matter of fact, they were not his own sheep, either, but were rather the sheep of his father-in-law.

This shepherd had come from Egypt to Midian, because Pharaoh sought his life. The desert, he thought, would be the last place where a king would look for a man who had left the kingdom. And certainly a desert was the last place in which you would expect to find such a one. For he did not look in the least like a shepherd. Rather he looked for all the world like a prince, or even like a king or an emperor, so tall and dignified and refined he appeared. Now, the priest of Midian, whose name was Jethro, had seven daughters. These girls drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flocks. And the shepherds came and drove them away. But this time a stranger

stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. When they came home, their father said—

"How is it that you are come so soon to-day?"

And they answered, "An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also drew water enough for us, and watered the flock."

Jethro said, "Where is he? Why is it you have left the man? Call him that he may eat bread."

So they called him, and he came, and later married one of them, and tended the flocks of his father-in-law on the Midian desert.

One day, as we started to tell you, he was tending the flock on Mount Sinai. Now, the grass was plentiful and long on this high mountain, because the shepherds in that part of the country believed it to be the home of God, and so were afraid to go up there with their sheep. In going up there with his animals this man was therefore considered very brave. On this particular occasion he saw a bush on fire without being consumed. He said, "I will now turn aside and see this strange sight, why the bush,

although it is on fire, is nevertheless not burnt up."

When he thus turned aside, a Voice spoke to him out of the burning bush. It called him by name.

"Moses! Moses!"

For it was the same man who, as a baby, had been found by the princess, and who had been reared in a royal palace, with all the opportunities that a king could give any one.

"Here am I!" answered Moses.

And the Voice said, "Draw not nigh hither. Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."

Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.

"Surely," said the Lord, "I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry to escape from their taskmasters. I know their sorrows. And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them to a land flowing with milk and honey. I will send thee unto

Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people out of Egypt."

Indeed, the Children of Israel were in bad straits, as Moses well knew. For the Egyptians forced the Israelites to dig canals, to work on the pyramids, to build walls, and to do various other sorts of labor that they were either too lazy or too proud to do themselves. And they placed taskmasters over these Hebrews to see that they did the work without rest. Several generations this went on.

When Moses heard what was expected of him, he very naturally shrank from the task, for he was a meek man. "Who am I?" he asked, "that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the Children of Israel out of Egypt?"

But the Lord assured him. "I will be with thee," the Voice said.

Moses was inclined to argue the point. "When I go to the Children of Israel," he said, "and tell them what I am to do, and they ask me what is His name, what shall I say?"

"Tell them," was the answer, "that I AM hath sent you to deliver them from the hand of their oppressor."

"They will not believe me," said Moses. "They will say, 'The Lord hath not appeared unto thee.' "

Then the Lord said to Moses, "What is that in thy hand?"

"A rod," Moses answered.

"Cast it on the ground," said the Lord.

Moses did so, and it became a serpent, coiling itself up as if to spring on him. And he fled from it.

After that the Lord said, "Put forth thy hand and take it by the tail."

And this Moses did also. Whereupon it became a rod once more.

"Now," said the Lord, "put thine hand into thy bosom."

Moses did so, and drew it forth white with leprosy. At the command of the Lord, he put it back again and, when he withdrew it, the hand looked like the other.

This appeared to be enough to convince Moses that he was called to be the deliverer of the Children of Israel. So he went home, informed his father-in-law concerning his call, and before long was on his way to the Valley of the Nile, with his wife and his two sons, to do the work the Lord had marked out for him.

Chapter XVI

PHARAOH AND GOD

Egypt was a great nation, the greatest in the whole world then, and Pharaoh was its ruler, the greatest king on any throne at the time. But he thought himself greater than he really was, as we shall see.

One time there were ushered into his royal presence two men. They were Moses and Aaron, brothers, both past eighty years old—which would be a very great age in our day, but not then.

Says Aaron, who is spokesman for Moses, just as Moses is spokesman for God, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness."

Says the king, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go?"

You see, he had hundreds of thousands of Hebrews working for him without pay, and working hard, too, as every one knew, especially their taskmasters.

"Nevertheless, show me a sign that your God

has appeared to you," said Pharaoh, without any intention but to mock the two men.

Aaron threw down the rod, which became a serpent forthwith.

"Huh!" said the king. "My magicians can do that! Here, you!" he shouted to his priests, false priests all, who threw down their rods. These, too, became serpents, but Aaron's ate up the others, and then turned back into a rod.

"You men are Hebrews," the king said, when he could find nothing else to say, "and should be at your work. Out with you—to your burdens!"

This to Moses and Aaron. And then to the taskmasters of the Israelites, "Make the people work more. Furnish them no more straw to make brick, but hold them to the same number of brick as before!"

Moses and Aaron left the palace, and the taskmasters went to do their bidding.

In this way Pharaoh placed himself squarely against the God of Israel—which is always a dangerous thing to do.

You have perhaps played some time in your life the game in which one person in a group, blindfolded, is required to find something that

is hidden in the room, while the rest shout that he is closer or farther away as he nears the object or goes father from it. Well, this is what happened, in a manner, to Pharaoh, when it came to making him give in on that matter of letting the Children of Israel go. For the ten plagues, as you may have heard them called, got closer and closer to his person as they neared the end.

Those ten plagues were perfectly horrible!

First, was the plague of blood. All the water in the river, in the canals, and in the ponds turned the color of blood. The fish died, and the Nile stunk like a carcass that had decayed.

Then there was the plague of frogs. Frogs hopped up out of the river in such numbers that they fairly covered the land where any Egyptian lived. They hopped into the houses, into the beds, into the very food, and got themselves mixed in with the kneading dough!

After that came the plague of lice—lice on beast and man, lice everywhere, like the dust your automobile gathers on a country road!

Next, flies or beetles infested the air. Thick clouds of these winged insects filled the air, till one could hardly breathe without getting a mouth full of the pests!

Then followed a dreadful disease, called murrain, that killed the cattle of the Egyptians!

The plague of blood, of frogs, of beetles, and of murrain were bad enough for any one, but they were much more horrible to the Egyptians than to other people, because the Nile, the frog, the beetle, and the cattle were sacred to these people.

That makes five plagues, with more, and worse, to follow—five of them. The sixth one was of boils and blains, on both men and animals. This was the terrible black leprosy, known as "the blotch of Egypt." Even the magicians, who had imitated some of the miracles of Moses and Aaron, were too sick to put in an appearance before these men.

The seventh was a hailstorm of terrific fury. It destroyed their food. Barley, wheat, cattle—all went down before this destroyer.

In the plague of locusts, the eighth, everything that was spared from the others, if it was eatable at all, disappeared before the devouring tongue of these pests. They came with the east wind and went away with the west.

A ninth plague brought on a darkness that was so thick it "could be felt." No one was able

to see any one else, no matter how close they might be to each other. Every one went about groping—and you can imagine with what discomfort they would do that!

Last of all, the first-born son in every Egyptian household throughout the land died miserably. Not a home but was a home of mourning—even the great Pharaoh's.

But the first-born among the Israelites did not die, because blood had been sprinkled on the door sills, and the angel of death, when he saw that blood, passed over that house, whence the Jews got their "passover," which they observe to this day.

During every plague, almost, the king said the Israelites might go. But as soon as the plague was gone he changed his mind, like a pampered child. This time, though, he meant it—at least for long enough to permit the Hebrews to leave the land of their bondage, even if he did chase them with his army in chariots and got drowned in the Red Sea! For it would not require as wise a head even as the king's to tell what the next calamity might be!

And so, at last, with expensive presents and hearty good wishes from the Egyptians, the

Children of Israel, now grown from seventy to about three millions in four hundred years, slowly worked their way out from under the hand of the oppressor, out from between the parted waves of the Red Sea, while, as they looked back, those same waves swallowed up their pursuers, and presently the sea was strewn with clothing and chariots and corpses.

Chapter XVII

THUNDER, LIGHTNING, AND A THICK CLOUD

At the time the Lord appeared to Moses on Sinai in the burning bush that was not consumed, he said to him, "When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God on this mountain." It took the Children of Israel two months to reach this sacred place, and they stayed here nearly a year.

Many things had happened in those two months between Egypt and Sinai.

One of these was the deliverance from the six hundred chariots of Pharaoh that were overwhelmed in the Red Sea. The Good Book says it was brought about by the Lord with an "outstretched hand" of power. Only God could have done that. And so this deliverance went down in the history of the Hebrew people as an event with which to compare other great events. There had been nothing quite like it.

And then there had been the miracle of feeding these millions in the desert. The desert, you know, in whatever country, does not yield much

that one can eat. That is why it is called a desert. And the desert of Arabia was no exception to the rule. So the Lord rained manna from heaven, and sent quails, so that the people might not starve to death. "At even the quails came up and covered the camp, and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. And when the dew was gone, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground." This "small round thing" the people gathered for food, putting in a double supply for the Sabbath.

Finally, the desert, as you may also know, is not a good place to find water. Therefore the Lord provided water for the people and the animals. Moses, at the command of God, smote a rock in Horeb with his wonderful rod, and out of this rock there immediately issued a beautiful stream of clear water, which supplied all their uses as long as they remained in the vicinity of Sinai.

In the third month out from Egypt, while these millions of men, women, and children, with their tents and animals, were resting in the valley that lies at the foot of Mount 'Sinai,

Moses, as was his wont, went up one day to the top of this mountain. And there the Lord talked with him.

"Say to the House of Jacob," said the Lord to Moses, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people, an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the Children of Israel."

Moses went down from the mount, called before him the elders of the people, and told them what the Lord had required him to say. They were glad, you may be sure, and answered together as one man, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do!"

Then Moses went back up the mountain.

And the Lord said unto him, "Go unto the people, and sanctify them, to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes, and be ready against the third day. For the third day I, the Lord, will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai. And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying,

'Take heed to yourselves that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it. For whoever toucheth the mount, whether it be man or beast, shall surely be put to death.' "

And Moses took this message to the people.

For two days, therefore, there was great excitement in the camp. The people were to hear God speak! Before this, only Moses saw Him. Only he had heard Him speak. The Lord spoke to Moses on the mount, and Moses in turn spoke to the people. Now, however, God was, at least for this once, to speak to the people directly and not through Moses. This was a mighty privilege. For a moment they must have repented of their murmurings against Moses and against the Lord. Hereafter they would try to do better.

And so there was great preparation. The people washed their clothes, they made their bodies clean, they endeavored to think only good thoughts and do only good deeds, and they sanctified themselves in every way for what was to happen on that third day.

"And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings and a thick cloud upon the mount, and

the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, so that the people that were in the camp trembled.

"Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God. And they stood at the nether part of the mount. Mount Sinai was altogether on smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire. And the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. When the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.

"And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mount. And he called Moses up to the top of the mount, and said to him, 'Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish."

And then with His own voice God uttered the words which we now know as the Ten Commandments. You will find these wonderful words in the twentieth chapter of the Book of Exodus, in the Bible.

Chapter XVIII

THE LONG WAY ROUND

Sometimes, when the road is new and the scenery is good, you do not go straight to the place you are bound for, but take rather a more or less round-about route.

That was the way with the Children of Israel, when they set out from Egypt for the Promised Land. Only, in their case it was not for the sake of the scenery, for there was nothing beautiful to speak of on the Arabian desert, but for quite another reason, as you shall see.

Forty years it took them to make a journey they might have made in exactly eight weeks—forty years of great hardship and suffering, when they might have had a comparatively pleasant time of it! It is as if the Utah Pioneers, instead of making the trip from the Missouri river to what is now Salt Lake Valley in less than three months, had wandered about on the prairies and great plains of the West till nearly all of them had died and left their bones to be dug up and picked by the hungry coyotes and the wolves there.

You see, it was this way:

The Israelites of that time were not much to boast of as a people. They had a good enough ancestry, for, you remember, the great Abraham, an upstanding man every way, was the founder of their nation. But either they had lacked opportunities for greatness in their new home of Egypt, or they had not made the most of their chances in that wonderful land. At any rate, they had not made the headway one might have expected from the descendants of a man who had seen and talked many times with God. The Bible, over and over again, calls the people whom Moses led out of the Nile Valley "stiff-necked," like an ox that did not want to wear the yoke and that, when it was on him, would rather break his neck than bend it this way or that so as to draw his load to the best advantage.

This "stiff-neckedness" on their part was always showing itself somewhere.

When the chariots of Pharaoh appeared behind them that time they got out of the sea, "the Children of Israel lifted up their eyes and were sore afraid." Forgetting the power and "the high hand" that had forced the king to let them go, they said to their leader, "Because there were

no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?" As if it was for the benefit of Moses, and not their own, that God had delivered them from a heart-breaking bondage!

The Lord saved them that time by a miracle of His power—which might have planted faith in them. But it did not.

Later, when they got hungry, they said to Moses, "Would to God we had died in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full!" Then God "rained bread from heaven" for them. And when they got thirsty, they cried out to Moses, "Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?" But the Lord again saved them by a miracle of power—He brought forth a stream of water from the rock in Horeb.

After that, while Moses was up on the sacred mount talking with God and receiving the tables of stone on which were written the Ten Commandments by the finger of the Lord, the people clamored so loudly for a god they could see and touch, that Aaron, who should have known

better, made them a golden calf to worship, exactly like one of the animals worshiped by the Egyptians. When Moses came down from the mount, his face aglow with the light of heaven, he was so horrified at what they had done that he threw down the tables and broke them in pieces! He could not understand, nor can we, how a people who had seen so many wonderful manifestations of God's power in their behalf, could bow down to a thing made with hands and utterly without any power! But it is true that they did.

Well, this constant murmuring and lack of faith brought on at last what these always bring.

On reaching the borders of the Land of Promise, the country which the Lord had given to Abraham and his posterity for an everlasting inheritance, the twelve tribes of Israel sent out twelve spies, one from each of the tribes, to investigate the new home and to report their findings. When this delegation returned, they brought back with them a huge cluster of grapes, some pomegranates, and figs. It was truly, they said, "a land flowing with milk and honey!" But the people of that land, they added, were "strong" and their cities "walled in." More-

over, they almost whispered in awe, "we saw the children of Anak there—great giants, by the side of whom we were as grasshoppers!"

Not all the spies reported this way, however. Two of them, Caleb and Joshua, had a different opinion of those inhabitants. Said Caleb, "Let us go up at once and possess the land, for we are able to overcome it." And Joshua, "Their defense is departed from them, and the Lord is with us. Fear them not!"

But the people, all that night, wept aloud in bitter disappointment. "Would to God we had died in Egypt," they cried, "or even in this wilderness!" Once they had feared hunger, and once thirst, and now the sword. They actually, the next morning, took up stones to stone to death not only Caleb and Joshua, but Moses and Aaron! They were for appointing a new commander and going back to the land of their bondage.

The Lord, the Bible tells us, was "angry" with the Israelites on this account. "How long will it be ere this people believe me," He asked of Moses, "for all the signs which I have showed among them? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them. All those men who

have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice—surely they shall not see the land which I gave unto their fathers, but their carcasses shall fall in this wilderness, all from twenty years and upwards, except Caleb and Joshua! To-morrow turn you, and get you back into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea!"

And so, for nearly forty years, these hordes of men, women, and children wandered about aimlessly in the waste places of the desert, till the lives of the older generation should have been worn out with hardship and suffering and have fallen down in the wilderness, with the Promised Land almost within sight, but never setting eyes on it—and all because, as always happens, they had been hard of understanding and short of faith, when they should have been different!

Chapter XIX

AN UPSTANDING PEAK

In every range of mountains you will find one peak that lifts its head higher into the clouds than all the others. It is so with men. Up, up, up from the lowest, your eyes can rise till they reach one that stands above all the rest—not tallest in body, it may be, but in mind, in soul.

Now, of all the men who lived in the world before Christ—millions upon millions of them—one of the very greatest was Moses. He is like some tall peak in a mountain chain that has pushed its way upward till it ends up there in the mist, and the sun never melts its heavy cap of snow, while every high peak far down below it is covered with a carpet of green or gold.

Two things made Moses great.

One of these was, that he sank his own interests in his love for other people.

It is a very strange thing, in this world of ours, that we have to seek our own interests by concerning ourselves with the interests of others. In this case, the farthest way turns out to be the

nearest. The more we think about ourselves, the less our own interests are served, in the long run, and the more we think about other people, the more our own value shows. It looks very much like a topsy-turvy world—does it not? Yet by that road have come all the truly great men and women out of the wilderness into the Promised Land.

How dear were the Children of Israel to the Lord? Do you know that? Let us see if we can tell. He picked out Abraham to be the founder of a nation—the Israelites. "Count the stars—if thou canst," God said to this good man. "So numerous shall thy posterity be!" From Abraham through Isaac, through Jacob, through the twelve sons of Jacob, came the Israelites—a numerous people. "If they keep my covenant," He told Moses, "they shall be my particular treasure." Moses was but an instrument, as we say, in the hands of the Lord to lead these people, chosen of Him, from Egypt to Palestine, where they might serve Him and become a mighty nation, to give birth to the Christ.

And yet on two occasions the Lord threatened to forsake them and to choose Moses to

found a people in their stead. And what did Moses do?

Not as many, perhaps most, men would do under the circumstances. They would have said, at least to themselves: "That will be a good thing. Then *my* name will become great, and be handed down through all time, like Abraham's. So the thing for me to do is to belittle these rebels in the sight of the Lord, so that He will despise them, and cast them off, and then to magnify their faults to Him!"

Moses did not do that—he was too great. Instead, He pleaded with the Lord for them. He said: "As thou art long-suffering and great of mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, now, I pray thee, pardon the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of thy mercy, as thou hast forgiven them from Egypt till now!"

And the Lord, in answer to this great man's prayer, spared the nation, although He punished them. Nothing shows better the unselfishness of Moses and his devotion to those whom he led, than this wonderful incident, which was twice repeated. And that, too, in face of the fact that they were always complain-

ing at him, even threatening to stone him to death.

The second thing that made Moses great was what he did for mankind after him.

Another very strange thing in our world is that some things last longer than others. That is because they are made different. Straw burns faster than wood, and wood cannot resist fire as well as brick or steel. Everybody knows that. It is the same with thoughts. Some ideas are of no value, and so pass away almost as soon as they come to light. Others last on through all time. Why? Because they are made of different fibre. One time all the world believed that the earth is flat, but no one believes that any more, for the reason that it is not true. When something is true, therefore, it lasts longer than something that is *false*.

Now, Moses gave to the world a great many thoughts that have lasted ever since his time—that is to say, more than three thousand years—and look very much as if they would go on as long as men are men, and things are things. Two and two are four, and will always be four, and you cannot think of their being anything else. Moses gave us things as true as that. Only, it

often takes a great deal of experience to see their truth.

For one thing, he gave us the Ten Commandments. A house must always have a firm foundation to stand upon—if it is to last. That is why rock is used for this purpose. Just so with government and religion. Their foundation must be strong. Now, the Ten Commandments are the foundation stones of society. On these rest our whole life of progress.

May be we can make this clear by talking of one of these famous Ten Commandments—stealing. It says, "Thou shalt not steal!" When you earn money by selling papers or tending babies, and your parents do not need it, it is yours to do with as you please. So, too, when you buy with it a bicycle or a necklace, the bicycle or the necklace is yours, your very own. Now, what a terrible state of things we should have if, when you put your bicycle away or laid down your necklace, somebody should run off with it. And so, in order to make these articles secure to you, there are laws against theft, with policemen and judges to hunt out and punish those who break this law. What a truly wonderful world this would be if every one obeyed

this law against stealing! We should not then have to lock up our belongings, or have policemen and judges—at least not so many of them.

Do you see now how deep down into the heart of things this one law goes—what a difference it makes to us all whether people keep it or break it? Well, the nine other Commandments could be explained in this same way, to show that they, too, go down into the very heart of our daily affairs. Then you would see, not only that they are the foundation stones of our society, but how truly great was the man who first gave them to us in the form in which they are found in the Bible.

Chapter XX

SEVEN TRUMPET BLASTS, AND A SHOUT

You may remember that Moses, when he brought the Children of Israel to the borders of the Promised Land, sent twelve men, one from each tribe, across the river Jordan to spy out the country. You may remember, too, that this committee, as we would say to-day, returned with an immense cluster of grapes, borne between two men, and the report that it was surely a land "flowing with milk and honey." And you may also recall that ten of these committeemen put a great scare into the hearts of the people by telling them how terrible the present inhabitants of the country were and how impossible it would be to overcome them—so great a scare, in fact, that the fearful and unbelieving Israelites rebelled, and in consequence were sent back into the wilderness to wander about till all the older people were dead.

That was forty years before. Since then Moses had died or been translated, and the faithful Joshua had become leader in his stead. More-

over, another generation had taken the place of those who had rebelled against the Lord—men and women who would have more faith in God.

Joshua, as you know, had advised going forward at once and taking the country. They could easily do so, he said, because the Lord was with them and would help them to fight their battles. A courageous and trusting stand, that was, and won for this bold warrior not only the favor of God, but also the promise that he should live to possess the new home.

The time had now come to take the land.

"This day," said the Lord to Joshua, "I will begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee."

And Joshua, on his part, said to the people, "Sanctify yourselves, for to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you."

And wonders He certainly did.

When the people removed from their tents, to pass over Jordan, the priests went before them, as the Lord had directed, bearing the ark of the covenant. And when the feet of the priests that bore the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, the waters that came down from

above rose up upon an heap, and those that came down toward the sea failed and were cut off. The priests that bore the ark stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan.

In commemoration of this great event twelve rocks were taken out of the place where the priests had stood in Jordan and twelve others put there instead. The first ones were set up in the place where the people camped that night.

Said Joshua in explanation, "When your children ask their fathers in time to come, 'What mean ye by these stones?' ye shall answer them, 'The waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant, when it passed over Jordan.' And these stones shall be a memorial unto the Children of Israel for ever."

The first town to be taken was Jericho.

Jericho was a strongly fortified city in the valley of the Jordan, about five miles from where the Israelites had crossed that stream. Its inhabitants were heathen and worshiped images of wood and stone.

When they saw the Israelites on this side Jordan, they shut up their town. None went

out, and none came in. Doubtless, too, they mustered all their men of war, and waited for an attack that never came. For their city was to be taken in a way they had never heard of and by a people who believed firmly that "by strength shall no man prevail."

Joshua instructed the priests to take up the ark of the covenant, and while seven others were to bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before it. To the people he said, "Pass on and compass the city, and let him that is armed pass on before the ark. But ye shall not shout nor make any noise with your voice, until I bid you shout. Then shall ye shout."

So all this was done.

Joshua rose up early in the morning. And seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord went on continually, and blew with the trumpets; and the armed men went before them; but the rearward came after the ark of the Lord, the priests going on and blowing with the trumpets.

Round and round the fated city of Jericho went this strange procession, once each day for six days, and seven times on the seventh day,

much to the astonishment, no doubt, of the people within.

On the seventh day, when the priests blew with the trumpets a longer blast than usual, Joshua said to the people, "Shout! For the Lord hath given you the city."

And the people shouted a great shout. Whereupon the walls of the city fell down flat, so that the warriors went up into it, each man straight before him. And they took the city. They burned it with fire, and all that was therein—except Rahab and her family, to whom two Israelitish spies had promised safety in return for what she had done for them. All the silver and gold, the brass and iron, found in the city, however, was first placed in the treasury of the Lord.

Joshua set a curse on the town-site. "Cursed be the man before the Lord, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho. He shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it."

So the Lord was with Joshua, and his fame was noised throughout all the country.

CHAPTER XXI

"WHO SWEARS TO HIS HURT"

Joshua was in his tent. It was after the walls of Jericho had tumbled down with that long trumpet blast and the shout of men ready for battle. Also it was after the men at Ai had defeated an army of three thousand Israelites, killing thirty-six of them.

There is an interesting story about that defeat —a story of how a man thought of himself too much, and came to grief himself and brought grief to others. We must stay long enough to tell it here, and then we shall be ready to go on from where we began.

When those three thousand came running home pell-mell, with the enemy fast on their heels, Joshua was so surprised and disappointed that he fell on the ground, face down, in surprise and disappointment. And there he lay till eventide, his clothes torn and his hair disarranged. He said, "Alas, O Lord God! Wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us?"

And the Lord said to Joshua, "Get thee up. Wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned. They have transgressed."

So Joshua, early the next morning, sought to find out who it was, particularly, that had sinned. He had brought before him all the army, tribe by tribe, and the tribe of Judah was taken. The tribe of Judah passed before him, house by house, and the house of the Zarhites was taken. When the house of the Zarhites appeared, family by family, Zabdi was taken. Zabdi's household came before him, man by man, and Achan, grandson of Zabdi, was taken.

It was he that had sinned.

Achan, on being questioned by Joshua, confessed that, in the capture of Jericho, he had taken a "goodly Babylonish garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold," which, after the battle, he had buried in his tent. This was contrary to an army rule.

"Why hast thou troubled us?" asked Joshua of the unhappy man, when these articles had been obtained from the tent, and his confession had been proved—"why hast thou troubled us? The Lord shall trouble thee!"

And poor, miserable Achan was stoned to

death, and his property burned, in the presence of all the people, as a warning against breaking the law of warfare.

And then the army went out against the men of Ai and smote them and took their city without any further difficulty.

But that is not what we started out to say when we began this story and spoke of Joshua in his tent.

Well, then, Joshua sat in his tent one time with the princes of Israel around him, when there came to his door the oddest looking group of old men he had ever seen.

They had on old shoes, clouted to their feet; their clothes were old and torn, and dusty with long travel on a country road; their wine bottles, too, which were made of skins, were old; and their bread dry and mouldy.

"We be come from a far country," they said to Joshua in answer to a question as to who they were. "From a far country thy servants are come, because of the name of the Lord thy God. For we have heard the fame of Him, and all that He did in Egypt, and all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites. Wherefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country

spake to us, saying, 'Take victuals with you for the journey, and go to meet them.'

"This our bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go unto you. But now, behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy. And these bottles of wine, which we filled, were new; and, behold, they be rent. And these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey. Now, therefore, make ye a league with us."

Joshua, who was never a suspicious man, "made peace with them, made a league with them, to let them live. And the princes of the congregation sware unto them."

Three days after that the armies of Israel went out to battle against the cities they had come to Palestine to take. And they heard that these strangers were neighbors, living not far away in the land! Presently these armies came upon the city in which the men "from a far country" made their home. It was one of the very towns that were to be captured and destroyed.

But "the Children of Israel smote them not, because the princes of the congregation had sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel. The congregation murmured against the princes.

But all the princes said unto all the congregation, 'We have sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel. Now, therefore, we may not touch them. We will even let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we sware unto them. But let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation.' "

Joshua called for the deceivers. "Wherefore have you beguiled us," he asked, "saying, 'We are very far from you,' when you dwell among us?"

They answered, simply enough, "Because it was certainly told thy servants, how that the Lord commanded Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you. Therefore, we were sore afraid of our lives because of you, and have done this thing."

So "Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the Lord."

And that is how highly Joshua and the princes of Israel valued their word, once it had been given, even though it was much to their hurt to do so.

Chapter XXII

THE SWORD OF GIDEON, AND OF THE LORD

You have no doubt heard the story of Old Dog Tray. Tray, you recall, had a great reputation in all the country round for being a decent kind of dog. But one time, when he fell in with a pack of mongrels bent on nothing but mischief, he was caught with them, and given a sound beating. After that people thought he was not one whit better than the other dogs, only sharper, for being able to keep it hid so long—which was too bad, because in his case it was not at all true. And so not only did poor old Tray get a beating that time, but he lost his good name in the bargain, which Shakespere says is the "immediate jewel of the soul."

This sometimes happens to boys and girls and men and women. They just cannot hold out, it seems, against others around them—the pull is so strong. And once it happened to the Israelites, who had a great name in all the country where they made their new home, on account of their God, Jehovah.

You remember how Joshua led them into the Land of Promise, which we now call Palestine. He overcame most of the heathen nations that lived there, and divided up the country on both sides of Jordan among the twelve tribes of Israel. Well, in course of time Joshua died—but not before he made a farewell speech in which he said a very fine thing to his people, who, you will remember, had a name for being stiffnecked.

"Choose you this day," said Joshua, "whom you will serve—the God your fathers served or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!"

The people who heard Joshua say this may have chosen that day to serve the true God with their great leader. For we are told that "the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that He did for Israel." But as time went on—four hundred and fifty years, if you can tell how long that is—"there arose other generations after them which knew not Jehovah, nor yet the works which He did for Israel."

You see, it was this way:

There were many nations in the land of Palestine before the Hebrews came—Amorites, Hitites, Jebusites, and so on—all heathen nations, worshiping gods of wood and of stone and of other materials that can be worked up by the hand into some image or other. Some of these nations the Israelites, on account of their own wickedness, could not drive out of the country nor kill off, as they were supposed to do. So these pagan gods were still worshiped there. One of these was named Baal, with his wife Astoreth. Now the Children of Israel, like Old Dog Tray, got to feeling that they should be like their neighbors. So they worshiped their gods as being one of the best ways of doing this.

But it did not prove so good a means as it looked. It never does. Instead, it came near proving their undoing. No doubt this was because the Israelites should have known better. For their forebears had been led out of Egypt by a real God, a God of power. And it is always a bad thing to go back on your higher knowledge. So the heathen peoples in Palestine—the Midianites in particular—turned

about face on the newcomers and got the upper hand of them, and oppressed them beyond their endurance almost. Then they *had* to worship the false gods, whether they wanted to or not—at least to appear to worship their gods.

Every once in a while, though, when the Israelites began to think of the God of their fathers, a deliverer would arise among the people. You may have heard the names of Barak and Deborah as among these. Perhaps a greater than these two was Gideon.

Gideon was threshing wheat one day by the wine-press, and trying, we are told, to keep his work a secret from the Midianites, lest they might come any minute and take the wheat away from him on one pretext or another. His father, Joash, was a priest of Baal, and had on his place that very time an altar built for this god, on which he offered up sacrifices. As Gideon was thus working under a great oak tree, an Angel appeared to him. "The Lord is with thee," said the Angel, "thou mighty man of valor! Thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent thee?"

Gideon said something, in his extreme modesty, about the lowliness of his family and his

own humble place in that family, and he said something, too, about wanting a sign, so that he might be sure it was not some bad angel come to lure him to his destruction. But the Angel, nothing loath, gave him a sign that convinced him.

First, he was to break down that altar to Baal and erect in its place an altar to the true God. This he did in the night time, so no one would interfere with him. You may well guess that the next morning there was a great to do, when the discovery was made—not so much by Gideon's father, who seems on the whole to have been a sensible man, but by the other worshipers of Baal in the town. They wanted to manhandle Gideon, but Joash said, "Let Baal, if he be a god, defend himself!" Which was a perfectly reasonable way to look at the matter. But as Baal was not at all inclined to come to his own rescue, Gideon went unpunished, and a sacrifice was offered on the new altar to the true God.

After that Gideon was to gather an army. Now, His idea was to get as big an army as he could, so as to take no chance. But that was not God's way. And so Gideon's army of thirty

thousand was reduced first to ten thousand and then to three hundred. With this handful of men Gideon was to meet the Midianites, who lay thick as grasshoppers in the valley.

The night these three hundred were gathered, Gideon and one of the soldiers stole into the camp of the enemy to see what they might discover. Said one man there to another: "I dreamed that a cake of barley-bread came into a tent and smote it, and overturned it, that the tent fell down." And the other answered, "This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon. For into his hand hath God delivered Midian!"

Gideon then divided his little band into three. Each was to come at the camp from a different direction, blowing their trumpets and waving their torches. They did this. Whereupon the Midianite soldiers, in a great and sudden confusion, fell upon one another and killed one another right and left!

This victory was followed by others, till he had freed his people from the yoke of the heathen. He ruled forty years, and then he died, leaving seventy sons to bear his splendid name.

Chapter XXIII

THE MAIDEN THAT GLEANED IN THE FIELDS

It was the time in Palestine when the wheat and the barley were being reaped. Not with great machines, such as we have to-day, which do the work so quickly and well, but rather with the hand, which is not only slow but very hard on the back. It was in the days when judges, like Gideon, ruled the Children of Israel.

One time a man named Elimelech, a Hebrew, went to Moab, with his wife Naomi and their two sons. The Moabites were descendants of Lot, who had settled east of the Jordan river and south of where Joshua had led his people. The Jews and the Moabites were therefore distantly related.

As time went on, the boys grew into men and married Moabitish girls, and as time went on Elimelech died and also his two sons, leaving three widows, two young and one old.

Very much discouraged by her misfortunes, Naomi called her two daughters-in-law to her one day after the three funerals, and said,

"Go, return each to her mother's house. The Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt kindly with the dead and with me."

Then she kissed them good-bye, and they, on their part, "lifted up their voice and wept."

Orpah, one of the young women, kissed her mother-in-law and went away to her own family, but Ruth, the other one, refused to go. "Intreat me not to leave thee," she said, "or to return from following after thee. For whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried."

And the two went back to the home of their husbands, to Naomi's old home in Bethlehem.

There they were hard put to it for food. No one was there to provide for them, as in the olden days when the men folk were alive. So Ruth went out into the grain fields to see if she could not, by following the reapers, glean a few handfuls of barley or wheat here and there, which she could later thresh out and carry home for herself and her mother-in-law.

It happened that the field where she went belonged to a rich kinsman of the dead Elimelech.

His name was Boaz. He was therefore a kinsman by law to Ruth also. But Ruth did not know this at the time.

"Who is the young gleaner?" Boaz asked of his foreman once.

The foreman told him.

Boaz went to Ruth. "Go not to glean in another field," he said to her, "neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens. Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them. Have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? And when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn."

Then Ruth fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, "Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing that I am a stranger?"

"It hath fully been shown me," answered Boaz, "all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband, and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people whom thou knewest not heretofore."

Then she said, "Let me find favor in thy sight, my lord, for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaiden, though I be not like one of thine handmaidens."

And Boaz said unto her, "At mealtime come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the wine."

And she sat beside the reapers. And he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left.

When Ruth went home that evening, she told her mother-in-law what had befallen her during the day. Then Naomi told her who Boaz was. She said—

"Behold, Boaz winnoweth barley to-night in the threshing floor. Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor. But make not thyself known unto him, until he shall have done eating and drinking. And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down."

Ruth did according to all that her mother-in-law bade her.

At midnight Boaz awoke and was afraid, for behold a woman lay at his feet.

"Who art thou?" he asked.

She answered, "I am Ruth, thine handmaid. Thou art a near kinsman."

And he said, "blessed be thou of the Lord. Fear not. I will do to thee all that thou requirest. It is true that I am thy kinsman. But there is a kinsman nearer than I. Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, that if he will perform not unto thee the part of a kinsman, then I will do so."

And she lay at his feet until morning. And she rose up before one could see another, her veil full of barley, which Boaz had given to her.

That day Boaz called on his kinsman, to see whether or not he would marry Ruth. For, according to the law of Moses, a widow's nearest kinsman on her husband's side should make her his wife. This kinsman, as it happened, could not do so. So Ruth and Boaz were married.

In time a son was born, whom they named Obed. And in time Obed grew up and married and had a son, whom he called Jesse. This Jesse, in turn, became the father of David, king of Israel. So that Ruth was the great grandmother of one of the kings of Israel.

Chapter XXIV

THE SEVEN LOCKS OF THE GIANT WHO BROKE HIS VOW

A true boy scout looks upon his "word of honor" as more binding than just his promise, and may be it is, because of the solemn way in which it is taken. In the olden days, too, they had their "word of honor," only, it was called a "vow." One of the Hebrew vows was termed the "vow of the Nazarite." Whoever took it was supposed not to drink strong drink or to eat anything unclean. And the sign of this vow was that he was always to wear his hair long.

Samson, who lived in the days of the judges in Israel, was a Nazarite.

Before Samson was born, an angel appeared to his mother. She should have a son, the angel said, and he was to be a Nazarite from his birth to his death. So you see that Samson's "word of honor" was more binding, if possible, than it could be otherwise. And that is a point to keep in mind.

During this period the Israelites got into trouble again. This time it was with the Phil-

istines, a heathen people whom Joshua had not been able to drive out or to kill off. They oppressed the Children of Israel greatly. But, till Samson came, no one even looked like a deliverer.

Samson became the Strong Man of his time.

Once, when he and his father and mother were on their way to a Philistine town to get a wife for Samson, a "young lion roared" at them. Saying nothing about the matter to them, he "rent the lion as he would a kid," and killed it.

On another occasion, after his marriage with this Philistine girl and after her parents had taken her away from him and given her to another, Samson, out of revenge for that act, "went and caught three hundred foxes, and took firebrands, and turned tail to tail, and put a firebrand in the midst between two tails. And when he had set the brands on fire, he let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks and the standing corn, with the vineyards and olives."

Again, some of his countrymen, wishing to get rid of him, tied him hand and foot with new cords and delivered him to the Philistines, who wanted him very badly on account of that

burnt corn. This was with his consent. When he got in the midst of these enemies, however, he broke the cords as if they had been burnt thread. Then, picking up the jawbone of an ass, he slew a thousand of them with it.

Another time he went into a house in Gaza. It was told the Gazites, "Samson is come hither!" So they lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city, saying, "In the morning, when it is day, we shall kill him!" But they reckoned without their host, as we say. For at midnight Samson came out unawares, took the doors of the gate, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all, and carried them up to the top of a hill!

The Philistines therefore came to be very much afraid of Samson, as you may guess. They wondered how they could get at the secret of his great strength. Their opportunity did not come till Samson, after he lost his wife, "loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah."

"Entice him," they said to her, "and see wherein his great strength lieth, that we may bind him and afflict him, and we will give thee, every one of us, eleven hundred pieces of silver."

And Delilah "enticed" him.

At first Samson did not tell her the truth about the secret of his strength. Now he said this, and now he said that. And each time she would have him bound with strong cords, or pin his hair down, or something, and say—

"The Philistines be upon thee, Samson!"

On which Samson would break the cords, and the Philistines would take to their heels in fright.

But at last, getting weary of Delilah's coaxing and tears, he told her the truth about his great strength lying in his vow. "If I be shaven," he said, "then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like other men."

Delilah "made him sleep upon her knees. And she called for a man, and caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head."

"The Philistines be upon thee, Samson!" she cried when his head had been shaved.

Samson rose as usual. He said, "I will go out as at other times, and shake myself." For he "wist not that the Lord had departed from him."

This time "the Philistines took him, and put

out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass, and he did grind in the prison house."

In honor of their victory over a man who looked as if he were a deliverer of his people, they held a great feast. There were thousands present rejoicing, three thousand being on the roof. Some one shouted for poor blind Samson—whose hair was now beginning to grow again.

He was brought out "to make sport" for the crowd.

"Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth," he said to the boy that held his hand.

The lad did so.

"O Lord God," Samson prayed, when he got between the pillars, "remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me only this once, O God!"

Taking hold of the two pillars, the one with his right hand and the other with his left, he tore them from under the building, which fell upon the lords of the Philistines, and upon the people, and upon himself, killing them all.

But there went down with that building a great hope, which withered like a flower before its time!

Chapter XXV

THE BOY WHO LIVED IN A TEMPLE

There was a certain man, whose name was Elkanah. He had two wives, Peninnah and Hannah. Hannah had no children. This man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to offer sacrifice.

On such an occasion Hannah was in bitterness because she had no children, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore. She vowed a vow once, and said, "O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and will give unto me a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life."

Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple. He spake unto Hannah, and said, "Go in peace. The God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of Him."

And the Lord remembered Hannah. It came to pass that she bare a son, and called him Samuel, because she had asked him of the Lord. And when she had weaned him, she took him up with

her to the temple, and brought him unto the Lord.

She brought the child to Eli the priest. "O my lord," she said to him, "as thy soul liveth, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord. For this child I prayed. And the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of Him. Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord. As long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord."

And Hannah prayed.

"My heart rejoiceth in the Lord," she said. "There is none beside thee, neither is there any rock like our God. For the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed. The Lord killeth and maketh alive; He bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar to set him among princes. He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness, for by strength shall no man prevail."

Elkanah and Hannah went to Ramah, their home, and the child Samuel did minister unto the Lord before Eli the priest.

The word of the Lord was precious in those

days, for there was no open vision.

And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see, and ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep, that the Lord called Samuel.

And Samuel answered, "Here am I."

And he ran unto Eli, and said, "Here am I, for thou callest me."

And Eli said, "I called not. Lie down again."

Samuel went and lay down.

And the Lord called yet again, "Samuel!"

And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here am I, for thou didst call me."

Eli answered, "I called not, my son. Lie down again."

Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him.

And the Lord called Samuel again the third time.

And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here am I, for thou didst call me."

And Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child. Therefore he said to Samuel, "Go,

lie down: and it shall be, if He call thee, thou shalt say, 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.' "

So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, "Samuel, Samuel!"

Then Samuel answered, "Speak, for thy servant heareth."

And the Lord said to Samuel, "Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all the things which I have spoken concerning his house. When I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth, because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. Therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering forever."

Samuel lay until morning, and opened the doors of the house of the Lord. And he feared to show Eli the vision.

Then Eli called Samuel, and said, "Samuel, my son!"

And Samuel answered, "Here am I."

Eli said, "What is the thing that the Lord hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me. God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide any thing from me of all the things that He said unto thee."

And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him.

Eli said, "It is the Lord. Let Him do what seemeth Him Good!"

And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord. For the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh.

Chapter XXVI

THE MAN WHO FOUND A KINGDOM

Very likely you have heard a small child cry for something that it wanted but that would not be for its good—a lighted match, perhaps, or a sharp razor blade. The child, of course, would not know that it might be burned or cut, but it would not listen to those who *did* know.

Well, the Israelites were like that once—only, to be sure, it was not for so slight a thing as a lighted match or a sharp razor blade, but for something far more harmful in itself. Moreover, some one was by to warn them, but, childlike, they would not heed.

Four hundred and fifty years the Lord had governed Israel through judges like Gideon and prophets like Samuel. He was their King. These men were chosen by Him, not on account of their great strength of body, but rather for the goodness of their hearts and the wisdom of their heads. Said Samuel, when he was about ready to die, "Witness against me before the Lord, whose ox have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? or of whose hand have I received a

bribe to blind mine eyes?" And the people were compelled to say that he had not defrauded them, nor oppressed them, nor taken ought of any man's hand. Surely, a government through such men could hardly be improved upon.

But the Israelites wanted to be like their neighbors. These, all, had kings. And these kings generally came to the throne—such as it was—by the strength of their arm. And when they got there, there was no getting them off, no matter how desirable that might be, till they died, and then some good-for-nothing son might take their place, and be worse than ever they were. The poor people were helpless. All they were good for was to furnish servants to the king, to fight when he picked a quarrel, and to provide money for wars and palaces and costly shows. One of these kings got great sport from watching captives, whose thumbs and great toes he had cut off, make an effort to pick up things with their four fingers! Nor did he see what a big savage he was till the trick was turned on him one time, and his own thumbs and great toes were cut off.

Of course, the Children of Israel, when they asked for a king, were thinking only of things

as they looked from a distance, and things, as you may know, have a way of putting on a better appearance at a distance than they have near by.

"Give us a king!" they said to Samuel—"Give us a king, that we may be like all the nations!"

This demand of the people made the prophet feel very badly. In truth, there was a slight occasion for some sort of change, for Samuel was getting old, and his sons, who were judges, "did not walk in his ways." But that they should have wanted a king—that was a grave matter.

Samuel prayed to know what to do. "Hearken to the people," was the answer, "for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them."

So the prophet looked about for a king.

Calling all the people together at a place named Mizpeh, Samuel spoke some plain words to them. "You have this day rejected your God," he told them, "who Himself saved you out of all your adversities. You have said unto Him, 'Nay, but set a king over us.' Now,

therefore, present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes."

This was done. The tribe of Benjamin was taken, then the family of Marti in this tribe, then Saul in the household of Kish.

But Saul could nowhere be found!

The fact is, Saul knew beforehand that he was to be chosen king that day. It came about this way: His father's asses having strayed away, Saul and a servant were sent out to hunt them. Not finding them, they went to the prophet Samuel to see if he, being a seer, might not be able to tell them where the animals were. They had been found, the prophet said.

But Samuel had a little matter to present to Saul, he added. The Lord had revealed to him that Saul was to be king over Israel!

Saul protested. Why, his tribe was the smallest of the twelve, and his family the most insignificant of all the families in his tribe! Impossible! But Samuel was firm. Saul was to be king nevertheless.

And so, on that great day when a king was to be selected, Saul 'hid himself." Searchers found him, however, and made him stand up before all the people to show himself.

And a fine upstanding man he was, to be sure, as they must all have admitted. For there he stood, a full head and shoulders above the tallest in that throng! One would think the whole people would be proud to call such a man king. But they did not all seem to have been. Perhaps it was because of his timidity and the lowliness of his family. Whatever the cause, Saul does not appear to have made as much of an impression that day as one would think.

But the Lord, in spite of the people's rejection of Him, put a strong heart in Saul.

It happened just at that time that Nabash the Ammonite came against one of the Hebrew cities, whose men said to him, "Make a covenant of peace with us." He answered, "I will on condition that you let me put out all your right eyes!" This would make them a reproach among all the tribes. So they said guilefully, "Give us seven days to think it over."

The thing came to the ears of Saul. "The Spirit of the Lord came upon him. He took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them to pieces, and sent them throughout all the coasts of Israel, saying, 'Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen!'

And the fear of the Lord fell upon the people."

In answer to this strange call there gathered under Saul's banner three hundred thousand men ready for battle. These went against the Ammonites, under the leadership of the new king, and "slew them until the heat of the day," and scattered the rest "so that two of them were not left together."

After that all the people, without exception, believed in Saul, son of Kish, the Benjamite.

Chapter XXVII

OBEDIENCE BETTER THAN SACRIFICE

One time Samuel the prophet came to Saul the king and said to him, "Thus saith the Lord, 'Go and smite the Amalekites, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not, but slay both man and woman and infant, ox and sheep, camel and ass.' "

Now, the Amalekites were a people living southeast of Palestine. They had been for hundreds of years a wandering nation, tramping the desert and preying on better tribes. This was the same desert through which the Children of Israel had come from Egypt to the Promised Land. The Amalekites had made an attack on the Israelites at that time, and otherwise troubled them. Although Joshua, under the direction of Moses, had beaten these tribes in a battle, still the Lord had commanded Moses to set down the statement in a book, that He "would utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven."

Dwelling with the Amalekites at this time

were the Kenites. The Kenites, too, had come in contact with the Israelites in the march to Palestine. But it was a pleasant contact. For one thing, they were descendants of Moses' father-in-law, and then, for another thing, they had "shown kindness to all the Children of Israel."

But how could the Amalekites be destroyed by Saul and the Kenites, who were with them, be saved? Very easily. Before making an attack on the Amalekites, Saul went to the Kenites and said, "Go, depart, get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them." So the Kenites left.

Then Saul smote the Amalekites, he and his army of two hundred and ten thousand men. He utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But he took Agag the king alive, and spared the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good.

The word of the Lord came to Samuel: "It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king, for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments."

This grieved the prophet very much, for he

loved Saul, with all his faults. All that night he cried to the Lord in behalf of the king.

Next morning early he sought Saul. The king greeted Samuel warmly with, "Blessed be thou of the Lord. I have performed the commandment of the Lord!"

Samuel said, "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?"

You remember that the commandment was for Saul to destroy *everything.*

Saul's answer was not as straight as it should have been. He said weakly, "They have brought them from the Amalekites. The people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God. And the rest we have utterly destroyed."

That was a shrewd answer. It gave as the purpose of this sparing of the best, that it was for sacrifice. But it did not deceive the prophet. For he knew that the animals had been saved as a reward of battle. It made Samuel almost sick with sadness.

Saul was on the point of leaving the presence of the prophet, thinking the meeting was over—at least hoping it was over.

"Stay," said Samuel, "and I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me this night."

"Say on," said the king.

And Samuel: "When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel? The Lord sent thee on a journey, and said, 'Go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed.' Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the Lord?"

Saul protested. "I have obeyed the voice of the Lord," he said, "and have gone the way which the Lord sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God."

"Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord?" asked the prophet. "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams!".

Then the whole truth came out. "I have

sinned," the king admitted. "I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words, because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice!"

Saul then requested the prophet to return with him to Gilgal, where they might worship the Lord together. But the prophet would not do that.

"I will not return with thee," he said, "for thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel!"

As Samuel turned to go, the king laid hold of the skirt of his mantle, which ripped in Saul's hand.

Samuel made a point of this incident. "The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day," he said, "and hath given it to a neighbor of thine, that is better than thou!"

"Yet honor me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people," pleaded the saddened king. "Turn again with me that I may worship the Lord."

So Samuel turned again after Saul, and Saul worshiped the Lord.

And Samuel looked about once more for a king over Israel.

Chapter XXXIII

THE SHEPHERD BOY THAT KILLED A GIANT

Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle, and Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and set the battle in array against the Philistines. The Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side, and there was a valley between them.

There went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, whose height was eight feet and eleven inches. He stood and cried out, in his armor, unto the armies of Israel—

"I defy the armies of Israel this day! Give me a man, that we may fight together!"

Every day the giant did this, as the armies were in array for the battle.

And Saul and all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid.

One day a shepherd boy came before the king. He had been sent there by his father to carry

food to his three brothers, all older than he, who were with Saul in the army.

"Take now for thy brethren," said the lad's father before he went, "these three and a half pecks of corn, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to thy brethren, and carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge."

Some men took the young shepherd before Saul the king. They said, "This shepherd boy wishes to know what the man will receive who kills this giant that defies the armies of Israel."

The king had promised that "the man who killeth him I will enrich with great riches, and will give him my daughter to wife, and will make his father's house free in Israel."

Said the shepherd boy to the king: "Let no man's heart fail because of him. Thy servant will go forth and fight with this Philistine!"

Saul said, "Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him. For thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth."

"Thy servant kept his father's sheep," was the reply, "and there came a lion, and a bear,

and took a lamb out of the flock, and I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth, and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him! And this Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine."

Saul armed the boy with his armor, and put an helmet of brass upon his head, also he armed him with a coat of mail. "I cannot go with these," the lad told the king, "for I have not proved them." And he put them off him. He took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, and, sling in hand, he drew near to the Philistine.

The Philistine came on and drew near unto the shepherd boy, the man that bore the shield going before him. And when he looked about and saw the boy, that he was but a youth and that he was ruddy and fair of countenance, he cursed in his Philistine way, and said—

"Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with

staves? Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field!"

"Thou comest to me," the lad answered, "with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield. But I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand. I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee, and give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know there is a God in Israel. All this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear, for the battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands."

On this the shepherd, running to meet the giant, put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slung it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead, and he fell upon his face to the earth.

After that the youth ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheaf thereof, and cut off his head therewith.

Thereupon the men of Israel and of Judah arose and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, clean to the valley and the gates of Ekron. Then they returned from chasing the Philistines, and spoiled their tents.

After it was all over, Abner, a general in the army of Saul, took the young shepherd, and brought him before the king, with the head of the Philistine in his hand.

"Whose son art thou, young man? and what is thy name?" Saul inquired.

And he answered, "I am David, the son of thy servant Jesse, the Bethlehemite."

One thing David did *not* say—that he had already been anointed by Samuel to be king of Israel, instead of Saul.

For one day the Lord had reproached the prophet for mourning over Saul. "I have rejected him from reigning over Israel," said the Lord. "Fill thine horn with oil, and go to Jesse, the Bethlehemite. For I have provided me a king from among his sons."

So Samuel had gone to Jesse's home, and had all his eight sons pass before him. Only when David was sent for was he able to make a choice —not because of the boy's appearance, but

rather because the Lord said, "Arise, anoint him, for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."

From that day forward the Spirit of the Lord was upon David, but an evil spirit troubled Saul.

Chapter XXIX

CLOSER THAN BROTHERS

You remember that time when a young shepherd boy with a "ruddy face" and "a goodly countenance" came into the presence of the king, carrying by the hair the head of the giant he had killed with a stone from his sling—the head which could not have been so very large after all.

Well, there was also present at that meeting one of the sons of Saul, a young man named Jonathan. He was probably older than David, but not much. Silently he stood there by the side of his royal father, and listened to him questioning the boy about himself and to the boy's timid answers, for the lad was not used to being before kings. But there were great goings-on in Jonathan's mind, just the same, even if he did not say anything.

It was a wonderful thing that young shepherd lad had done, to kill a giant with one stone wet from the brook, and the other four still in his shepherd's bag—to kill a giant that had put a great scare into the hearts of all those hardened

warriors on the hillside where Saul was! No wonder the women and girls—wives and daughters and sweethearts of those same warriors—danced and sang as he came home victorious, and all the people shouted, "Saul hath killed his thousands, but David his tens of thousands!"

It was a daring thing, too, that encounter! For in going down into that valley where the giant was in his strong armor, David had taken his life in his hands. But he had not been afraid. He had trusted in God, who can use as effectively a small stone in a shepherd's sling as He can a sword in a giant's right hand, or even, for that matter, the thunderbolt in a cloud or the earthquake and the storm.

As these thoughts passed through Jonathan's mind on that occasion, his heart went out to the courageous David. For the Book says that "when David had made an end of speaking unto Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. He stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle. Then Jonathan and David

made a covenant. And Saul took David that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house."

The friendship that these two struck up that day before the king was both strong and lasting. Not for a moment, till it ended in the death of one of them, was it in danger of being broken up, although it was tested many a time as the years came and went in those troubled days, especially for David.

For the king—a naturally jealous, changeable creature, governed by his feelings more than by his mind—kept his eye on the young giant killer, so as to discover some fault in him. For after a while Saul heard about that anointing of David to be king of Israel, and he certainly knew directly of that shouting out of a comparison between himself and David. And so he resorted to all kinds of schemes to get rid of his unwelcome successor.

He gave his daughter Michal to David to be his wife—not because he wished to keep his promise before Goliath was slain, but because he wanted to lay a trap, two traps, in fact, before the boy's feet. "I want no dowry," Saul said, "except that you kill for me one hundred Phil-

istines!" He hoped that David might thus be killed. But he was not killed. Instead, with some help, he slew his hundred Philistines, and another hundred, which he threw in for good measure!

And when he and Michal were married and living in a house by themselves, the king was mean enough to think that his daughter would help him be rid of David. But Michal loved her husband—as indeed everybody did, except Saul. And so, once when some of the king's spies came to the house while David was supposed to be asleep in bed, they found instead a wooden dummy, which she had put there after David had gone into safety.

Failing in his trust of every one around him, the king finally began to think about doing the job of killing David himself. On two or three occasions he cast a javelin at his son-in-law, who was too quick for him, however, and so escaped, leaving the dart quivering in the wall, by which he had been standing.

Jonathan and David often talked of this bitter, unreasoning hatred of the king for David. At first Jonathan could not believe that his friend's life was really in danger. But he came to know that it was.

"Let not the king sin against his servant David," pleaded Jonathan once to his father. "Because he hath not sinned against thee, and his works have been to thee-ward very good. For he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the Lord wrought a great salvation for all Israel. Thou sawest it, and didst rejoice. Wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?"

Touched by his son's plea, he said, "As the Lord liveth, he shall not be slain!"

But this was only a passing mood, which he quickly forgot. And then even Jonathan's life was in danger, whenever that young man sought to defend his friend. Once his father called him names, and cast a javelin at him, as he had done at David, and Jonathan had to flee for safety. Always, however, Jonathan defended David, looked out for his interests, and warned him if danger lurked in his path.

David had it in his power once to kill the king, and no one be the wiser as to who had done the deed. Saul, with three thousand men at arms, went out looking for David. On the way he turned alone into a cave, in which the young man was hiding. The king lay down to sleep.

But instead of killing "the Lord's anointed," David merely cut off a piece of the royal robe, which he later showed the king. This gave him a chance to lay before Saul the true situation. The king thereupon took him back into his service—no doubt with not a little inner suspicion.

In the end, however, both Saul and Jonathan fell in battle. The king died, and so did Jonathan. We do not know just how Jonathan died. As for the king, he was wounded nearly to death, but, seeing the enemy coming and not wishing to give them the credit, he besought one of his own men to run the sword through him. This man, it was, who ran with the news to David.

"How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!" exclaimed the new king. "O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan. Very pleasant hast thou been to me. Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women!"

Chapter XXX

A SHEPHERD BECOMES A KING

Every one has his work in the world. Sometimes that work is big, and sometimes it is little. But there it is waiting for you, just the same. The main thing is whether you do it, and how.

David, king of ancient Israel, had his work to do also. It had been marked out for him by the Lord, who had made him a king out of a boy who had been doing very humble work in the world—tending sheep. The work David had been called to do consisted of two things. First, he was expected to overcome all the enemies of the Israelites and to establish one great kingdom of Israel. And then, secondly, he was to perfect the worship of Jehovah among the people.

Let us take up these two duties of the king separately and see how he carried them out.

You may remember that Joshua was to expel or to kill off all the old inhabitants of Canaan, or Palestine, so as to make room for the Israelites. And you may remember, too, that he was unable to do this completely, because of the fre-

quent disobedience of his people. So it came about that there remained in the country many different tribes of heathen, such as the Midianites and the Philistines, who picked quarrels with the Israelites whenever they could, and sometimes conquered them, as in the days of Gideon and Samson.

King Saul—he of the tall figure, you remember—fought a great deal with these pagan tribes. For fighting was about all he was good for in the world. And he had considerable success one way and another in getting more elbow room for the Children of Israel. But, on the whole, he failed, partly on account of his own weaknesses and partly on account of the weaknesses of his people, as we may see in the case of the Philistines. When Saul died, therefore, he left the kingdom in a bad way so far as its enemies were concerned. And so David had to pitch in with a right good will and finish this work of Joshua and of Saul, as soon as he could make himself king of the whole people.

For you should know that, in spite of the fact that he had been anointed king by Samuel while Saul was alive and reigning and that everybody knew he was to be king after Saul died, he had

nevertheless to fight his way to the crown that Saul had worn.

Being of the tribe of Judah, he had no trouble there. They crowned him king of Judah at Hebron. But when it came to being king over all Israel—that was another matter. A general named Abner, a scheming politician, as we say to-day, had his own notions as to who should be king, and for reasons which we have no difficulty in guessing. He is the same man who brought the young shepherd to the king after the braggart Goliath had been so neatly dispatched with that smooth stone fresh from the brook. Abner set up as king of Israel a son of King Saul—a young man by the name of Ish-bosheth. Not having any real kingly qualities, however, Ish-bosheth lasted but two short, turbulent years. For one day some men brought his head to David, just as David had brought Goliath's head to Saul. Only, poor Ish-bosheth had been killed in a less heroic manner than the Philistine giant. Then David became king of all the Israelites.

First, King David "smote" the Philistines. They always took their gods, which were made of wood and stone, to the battlefield with them.

But this time the gods were of no help to them whatever. For the armies of Israel fell upon them, gods and all, and made short work of them. And in the end, those who were left of them were glad to sue for peace and promise to be good the rest of their lives.

Then he went against other peoples who had been troublesome—the Syrians, the Edomites, and others—one after another, till he made them promise to behave. Some of the kings, when they saw what was happening to the Philistines and the Syrians, came to David of their own accord and entered into a league of peace, bringing presents with them to win his good will. One of these was Hiram, king of Tyre.

Pretty soon, then, David was not only king of all the Israelites, but the greatest king in that part of the world where Palestine was.

The kingdom established, he set to work establishing the worship of Jehovah.

One of the things next his heart was to erect a house for the ark of God. He had vowed to the Lord not to give sleep to his eyes till he had found a "place for Jehovah, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob." Ever since the days of Moses the ark had been kept in a tent. Some-

times it had really been unsafe. For, at least on one occasion, it had been taken by the Philistines, and kept by them till they were glad to be rid of it because it came near being their undoing. But that is another story. So David had wanted for a long time to build a house for this sacred treasure.

Jerusalem was the place chosen, not only for this sacred building, but as the capital of the kingdom. A beautiful site it was, to be sure, and safe, in addition. It was located on top of a mountain, in the central part of the kingdom, and off the main highway over which nations went to fight one another. The place had been captured from the Jebusites.

But David was not to have the honor of erecting this house. That was to fall to his son Solomon. He did, however, take the ark there, with great ceremony—singing and dancing and rejoicing. "And they brought in the ark of the Lord, and set it in its place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it. And David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord."

Chapter XXXI

THE WISDOM AND SPLENDOR OF KING SOLOMON

What would you do if two women came to you with two babies, one dead and one alive, each claiming the live baby as hers, and wanted you to decide to which it belonged?

Well, just that problem was put before King Solomon, soon after he became king. Here is the whole story in the language of the Bible.

There came two women unto the king, and stood before him.

One woman said, "O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house, and I had a child in the house. On the third day after my child was born, this woman had a child. But her child died in the night, because she lay on it, and she arose at midnight and took my son from beside me, while I slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid the dead child in my bosom. When I rose in the morning to nurse it, behold, it was dead. But when I considered it, it was not my son."

The other woman answered, "Nay; but the living child is my son, and the dead is thy son."

And the first woman replied, "No; but the dead is thy son, and the living is my son."

"Bring me a sword!" the king said.

And they brought a sword before the king.

Then he said, "Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other."

Then spake the woman whose the child was, "O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it!"

"But the other said, "Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it."

And the king answered, "Give her the living child who wished it not divided, and in no wise slay it. She is the mother of it."

All Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged. And they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment."

This wisdom came to Solomon, the son of David, we are told, in answer to a desire he had expressed in a dream. In this dream the Lord appeared to him, and said, "Ask what I shall give thee."

Solomon answered, "Thy servant is in the midst of thy people whom thou hast chosen, a

great people, that cannot be counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad."

And the Lord said, "Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life, neither riches for thyself, nor the life of thine enemies, but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment, behold, I have done according to thy words. I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart, so that there was none like thee before, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor, so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days."

King Solomon had a great reputation in his day for being exceptionally wise, and this reputation has followed him down to our own times.

That was because, in part, of what he did. The way in which he found out who was the real mother of the living child, shows how deep was his understanding of the human heart. For wisdom is not a matter of just knowledge, but of how to use knowledge—to know what is the right thing to do under certain circumstances.

And Solomon seems to have had the ability to do this in an unusual degree.

But his reputation is partly due also to what he said. For he was a student as well as a king. "He spake three thousand proverbs, and his songs were a thousand and five. He spake of trees, from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall. He spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes." You have probably heard the saying, "A soft answer turneth away wrath." Solomon said that. He also said, "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall," and "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

It was Solomon, and not David, that had the great honor of erecting the temple in Jerusalem. And a magnificent building it was, too, the fame of which spread everywhere.

Seven and a half years it took to finish the temple. No sound of a hammer was heard on the grounds when it was abuilding, for all the rock and all the timber were prepared at a distance. Hiram, king of Tyre, aided very much in its construction, and a man named Hiram was

its architect. Nearly two hundred thousand men were at work at one time getting the materials for it and preparing that material for its various parts. It was not a large building, as public buildings go, being about one hundred and fifty feet in length, by about half that in width, and about fifty-five feet in height. But everything was the best that money could buy in that day, inside and out. Brass and gold were both used lavishly in the building. And why should it not be so, since it was to be the dwelling place of Jehovah?

The completion of the temple was the occasion for the grandest celebration in all the history of the Israelites. The feast alone continued for two weeks, for which twenty-two thousand oxen and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep were slain. Solomon himself offered the dedicatory prayer. And the Lord showed by many signs that He accepted the temple as His house.

In the forty years of Solomon's reign he became the greatest, the wisest, and the richest king of his times, as well as the most famous. Indeed, his fame and the fame of his city and temple and palace spread everywhere. The Queen of Sheba came from Arabia to see whether or

not what she had heard about the king and Jerusalem was true. When she left for her home, she said, "The half was not told me. Thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighteth in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel."

Chapter XXXII

ELIJAH THE TISHBITE

One time a king of Israel named Ahab was sitting in his royal home, when he was disturbed by the entrance of a stranger, "a hairy man with a girdle of leather about his loins."

Ahab was not only a wicked king, but a thoroughly bad man. You may have heard of him before. He led the whole nation from the worship of Jehovah to the worship of Baal—of whom you may also have heard. And then, again, he stole a poor man's land, all he had, and put him to death in the bargain. These things he did partly as a king, but chiefly as a man, or, strictly speaking, as a no-man. He was greatly helped in his wickedness, if a bad man needs to be helped in such matters, by his wife, who had been a heathen princess in Tyre and whose name was Jezebel. Ahab and Jezebel —these are among the vilest names in all history. In the end, though, this bad king and his wicked queen came to a terrible end, as they richly deserved to do. They were both killed, and their bodies eaten by dogs!

But we are getting ahead of our story.

The stranger who entered the royal palace on this occasion was a prophet. His name was Elijah. No doubt you have heard of him, too. He came from no one knew where, like a whirlwind or a cyclone, which he really resembled very much. And he went no one knew where, except Elisha, who "poured water on his hands."

But here, again, we are getting ahead of our story.

Said Elijah to the king, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, there shall not be any dew nor rain these years, but according to my word!"

And then Elijah left as suddenly as he had entered, leaving the king dumb with astonishment.

But Ahab, as you may be sure, did not stay dumb very long. He was furious. He, the all-powerful king, had been told that he should have no rain, and by such a man, too! So he ordered his men to hunt for and punish this "disturber of the peace of Israel."

Elijah, however, had gone into hiding. The Lord had told him to. "Get thee hence," was the word of warning, "and turn thee eastward,

and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be that thou shalt drink of the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there." So he did. "And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening, and he drank of the brook." Every now and then, however, he made his appearance to some one, and this some one would go post-haste to the king, on which the king would send to the place for the prophet, only to find that the prophet had suddenly and mysteriously disappeared. And then the king would fly into a rage again, and become violent.

After a while "the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land." So Elijah betook himself to a place called Zarepheth, where there was a widow. Going to her, he said,

"Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. Also a morsel of bread in thine hand."

"I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse," she answered, "and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I

may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it and die."

"Fear not," said the prophet. "Go and do as thou hast said, but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth."

All of which proved true.

Meantime, the drouth came, and famine, with no grass to feed the starving horses of the king, so that he and his man Obadiah went out to see if there were any fountains or brooks with grass on their borders.

While out thus, the king came suddenly upon the prophet Elijah, who had been told by the Lord to put himself in the way of Ahab.

"Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" asked Ahab.

"I have not troubled Israel," the prophet answered, "but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim. Now, therefore, send, and gather to me all Israel un-

to Mount Carmel, and also the prophets of Baal."

Ahab went home and did as Elijah asked. When the day came and the great crowds had arrived, the prophet said to the people,

"How long will ye halt between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him.

"I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord, but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks. Let them choose one for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under. I will dress the other, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under it. And call ye on the name of the Lord. And the God that answereth by fire, let Him be God."

And all the people answered, "It is well spoken!"

The prophets of Baal had the first trial. All that day, from morning till night, they cried to their gods, "O Baal, hear us!" But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made.

At noon Elijah mocked them. "Cry aloud," he said, "for he is a god. Either he is talking,

or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or it may be he is sleeping and must be waked!"

And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. But there was neither voice nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.

Then Elijah said unto all the people, "Come near unto me."

He built an altar of twelve stones, with a trench about it, put wood on the altar, and the bullock, and had twelve barrels of water poured over the whole till the trenches were filled.

"Hear me, O Lord," he cried, "hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again!"

Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when the people saw it, they fell on their faces, and said, "The Lord, he is the God—the Lord, he is the God!"

And the false prophets were put to death on the spot.

After this the prophet Elijah threw his man-

tle over a man who was plowing with two oxen, as much as to say, "You are my attendant." This man was Elisha. Elisha followed Elijah from that time to the day the prophet was taken up to heaven. And we do not hear of him again till he appeared to Joseph Smith in the Kirtland temple.

Chapter XXXIII

THE MAN WHO LOOKED FORWARD AND NOT BACKWARD

Have you ever been "down in the dumps," as we say—when everything seemed to go wrong, when all the lights went out on you, so to speak, and left you in total darkness, with not even a match to bring on a new light? Of course you have. Everybody has. That was because you were thinking of the past. And then have you ever had some one come along, when you were in this mood, and tell you that you had a birthday coming, or that Christmas would soon be here, or that a grand party was to be held next week? How you cheered up at once! That was because you had been persuaded to look up and forward.

Well, it was something like that with the Children of Israel in the time of Isaiah the prophet. That would be about seven hundred years, roughly speaking, before the appearance of Christ. Only, in the case of the Israelites, their low spirits were due to their disobedience and wickedness.

You have already seen how the king and the people treated the prophet Elijah. You know that he had to go into hiding and that he had to bring on a contest, if we may say so, between God and Baal, before the nation would be convinced that there was a God in Israel. And even then they did not seem to care whether they served the One or the other. And so, before long, the Lord permitted a foreign king actually to take ten of the twelve tribes out of the land to which He had led them, and to bring other peoples there who would not be so hard to manage.

This, you may well imagine, put something of a scare into the hearts of those who were left —the tribe of Judah mostly. For, as you should know, they were only less disobedient and wicked than the others, if you could have made them believe that. These, too, had a king, who had his own notions, wrongheaded as they were, about how to escape the fate of the ten tribes.

Then Isaiah came upon the scene. He was one of the greatest prophets that ever lived, and he was one of the greatest men—great in mind, great in heart, great in soul. We still cherish his writings as among the finest in any language

—mainly because they help us to keep our eyes looking forward instead of backward. For the Golden Age of the Greeks and Romans was in the past, but the Golden Age of the Israelites was in the future.

First of all, Isaiah told the people in very plain words about their many sins. They had forsaken the God of Abraham and Moses and David, and had gone after the heathen gods of their neighbors, in order to be in fashion. Elijah, you remember, told the other tribes the very same thing—and proved it. That was their main trouble. And then they had also their national sins. The king and the princes were "grinding the face of the poor" by laying on them heavy taxes to keep up a great show and pomp at court—just as Samuel had said they would. Besides, the nation was not taking care of the widow and the fatherless, as it was required to do. Then, too, there were more personal sins to be accounted for—stealing and lying and cheating and trying to get rich at other peoples' expense.

"The whole head is sick," the prophet said of the nation, "and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is

no soundness, but wounds and bruises and festering sores." It was of no use, he told them, to pray or to offer sacrifices till they had better intentions so far as their conduct was concerned.

And so the only thing for the nation to do was to repent with all their heart, and seek forgiveness. "Wash you," the prophet said, "make you clean, put away the evil of your doings, cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."

If they did not do that, dreadful things should befall them. They would not be forgiven of their sins. The Lord would not hear them when they prayed, but would hide His face from them. The agreement that the king was making with a foreign king, which was against the law of Moses, should prove the undoing of the nation. Then what had already happened to the ten tribes would also happen to them—they should be taken captive to Babylon, never to return till they had repented.

But if, on the other hand, Isaiah said, the people should now repent, their sins would be forgiven, even though these "were like scarlet and red like crimson." They should eat the

good of the land, and not be "devoured by the sword." Their city should be called "the City of Righteousness," and Zion should be redeemed with judgment.

Isaiah tried everyway to fix their minds on the glorious future that was in store for the nation and for the world.

He spoke to them of the Christ that was to come—the "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"—and how He would be taken "as a lamb to the slaughter" and "find His grave with the wicked and with the rich in His death."

He spoke to them also about the time when "swords should be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruninghooks," when "nation should not lift up sword against nation any more," and when "the wolf should dwell with the lamb, the leopard lie down with the kid, the calf and the young lion play together," and when they should not destroy "in all the holy mountain, and the earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the deep."

A truly wonderful message of hope, to be sure! But the people did not listen to it. They just *would* go their own way, till pretty soon, as we shall see in the next chapter, their light,

too, went out, just as the light of the ten tribes went out—only, in this case it came back after a while.

Chapter XXXIV

THE YOKE THAT COULD NOT BE BROKEN

What would you think if you saw a man walking the streets of your town with a yoke on his neck such as used to be worn by oxen when they were hitched to a plow or a wagon? No doubt you would think very queer things—as you would have a right to do.

Yet such a sight the inhabitants of ancient Jerusalem looked on one time about a hundred years after Isaiah lived. But to them it was not so strange as it would be to us, for they were used to seeing ideas thus acted out—dramatized, as we say. What must have greatly surprised them, however, was to see another man go up to the man with the yoke, take the yoke from off his neck, and break it in pieces. The whole scene would arouse every one's curiosity to know what it all meant.

The man who was going about the streets with the yoke on his neck was Jeremiah, another prophet of the Lord. He was taking this

means to let the people know that, unless they repented and turned to God, He would allow the king of Babylon to take them captive to that city, where they should serve a foreign ruler. "Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon," said Jeremiah, "and serve him and his people."

And the man who broke the yoke was named Hananiah, a false prophet. Hananiah's act pleased the people more than Jeremiah's, for they very naturally did not like the idea of being servants to a strange king and people, and they thought that by just disliking the idea, they could get rid of it.

Jeremiah turned to Hananiah and said, "The Lord hath not sent thee. Thou makest this people to trust in a lie. Therefore, thus saith the Lord, 'Thou hast broken the yoke of wood, but I will make for them a yoke of iron. As for thee, I will cast thee from off the face of the earth. This year thou shalt die, because thou hast taught rebellion against the Lord.' " And Hananiah died that year.

Before this the Lord had spoken to Jeremiah and called him to be a prophet. In fact, God told him that he had been set apart to be a

"prophet unto the nations" in the spirit world, before he was born.

Jeremiah, being a humble man, answered, "Oh, Lord God, behold I cannot speak, for I am a child."

"Say not, 'I am a child,' " the Lord replied, "for to whomsoever I shall send thee thou shalt go, and whatsoever I shall command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid because of them, for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord."

Thereupon the Lord put forth His hand and touched Jeremiah's mouth, and said, "Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

And so the prophet went to the king, the princes, and the people with his unwelcome message, feeling that whatever happened to him did not matter much, so long as he delivered the word of the Lord.

His message he put thus: "Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from afar, O House of Israel, saith the Lord, a mighty nation, whose language thou knowest not. They shall eat up thine

harvest, and thy bread, which thy sons and daughters should eat. They shall eat up thy flocks and thine herds. They shall eat up thy vines and thy fig trees. And the carcasses of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth, and none shall fray them away. Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, for the land shall be desolate." Seventy years it should be that way, while its people should be in captivity in Babylon.

Zedekiah was king of Judah at the time. He had made an agreement with the Babylonish king to be his subject, but had broken this agreement, against the advice of Jeremiah and other prophets. Poor Zedekiah, being a weak man, was in two minds all the time. He did not know whether to go with the princes and the false prophets, like Hananiah, or with the true prophets, like Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

One time he sent for the prophet, hoping to get a word of encouragement. "Is there any word from the Lord?" he asked when Jeremiah came.

"There is," replied the prophet. "Thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon!"

It was too late now for both king and people to save themselves. They had sinned away their day of grace with the Lord.

The story of how the combined armies of Babylon and other nations who had a grudge against the Israelites, came against Jerusalem and carried the people away is told in this simple language:

The city was besieged, famine prevailed, and there was no bread for the people. The city was broken up, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king's garden, and the king went away toward the plain. But the army overtook him in the plains of Jericho, and all his army were scattered with him. So they took the king, and brought him up to the king of Babylon, and they gave judgment upon him. And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon.

The captain of the guard, a servant of the

king of Babylon, came unto Jerusalem. And he burnt the temple, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house he burnt with fire. And the army brake down the walls of Jerusalem. Also he carried away to Babylon the rest of the people that were left in the city, and the fugitives that fled away to the king of Babylon.

A little before this, Lehi, one of the prophets that warned the Jews, left Jerusalem with his family and a few others, and went to what is now called America, where they became the Nephites and Lamanites. And then, too, about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, Mulek, a son of the king, escaped with some others, and came to the land occupied by the children of Lehi, becoming the Mulekites till they were absorbed by the others.

As for the Jews that were carried away captive to Babylon, we shall hear of them again. For the Lord had said to Jeremiah, "Fear not, O Jacob my servant, saith the Lord. I am with thee. I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee. But I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in a measure. Yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished."

Chapter XXXV

WHEN THE LIONS' MOUTHS WERE CLOSED

While the Jews were in captivity in Babylon, there lived a Hebrew in that city, whose name was Daniel. He had gone there when a young man, at the time King Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem. Always Daniel clung to his faith and trusted in the God of his people.

When he first went to Babylon, he and three other Hebrews were given instructions that would fit them to "stand in the palace of the king," because they were "well favored, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science," and could easily learn the Chaldean language.

The king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank. But they requested that they be given vegetable foods instead of meats and wine, which were contrary to their religion. At first the prince who had them in charge objected, fearing that it would make them thin, but he was persuaded to give them a trial. The trial proved satis-

factory. At the end of ten days their countenance appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which ate of the king's meat. God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

Once the king had a dream, which he could not interpret. He could not even remember the dream. So he called before him all his wise men, of whom Daniel was one, to see if they could not tell him the dream and its interpretation. They could not, and he ordered all their heads cut off. But Daniel saved them. Going home, he prayed to God that He would reveal to him the dream with its meaning. And the Lord did so. Then Daniel went before the king.

He said: "The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, show unto the king. But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known unto the king what shall be in the latter days. As for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living."

After a time Nebuchadnezzar was supplanted by another king, named Darius, king of the

Medes and Persians. Darius, too, favored Daniel, because "an excellent spirit was found in him," and preferred him to the presidents and princes of the realm. This, of course, made the presidents and princes jealous of Daniel, and they sought to put him out of their way.

They therefore went to the king with the suggestion that he issue a decree that could not be altered, that "whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days," except of the king, should be cast into the den of lions. This they did, hoping to catch Daniel, against whom they could find no objection otherwise. The king signed the decree, without knowing its purpose. Then, of course, it could not be changed.

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house. His windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.

Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the decree. "Hast thou not signed a decree," they said, "that every man that shall ask a petition of any God or man

within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?"

"The thing is true," answered the king, "according to the laws of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not."

Then answered they, "Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day."

The king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him. And he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him.

Then these men assembled unto the king, and said, "Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, that no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed."

Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake unto Daniel, "Thy God whom thou servest continually, He will deliver thee."

A stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den. And the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signets of his lords, that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.

Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting. Neither were instruments of music brought before him. And his sleep went from him.

He arose very early in the morning, and went in haste to the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel. "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?"

Then Daniel said unto the king, "O king, live forever! My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me. Forasmuch as before Him innocency was found in me, and also before thee, O king, I have done no hurt."

Then the king was exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.

And the king commanded, and they brought these men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, and the lions brake all their bones or ever they came at the bottom of the den.

Chapter XXXVI

HOW A POOR JEWESS BECAME QUEEN AND SAVED HER PEOPLE

There was a certain Jew in Sushan, whose name was Mordecai. And when the officers of the king brought all the fair maidens of all the provinces before the king, so that he might choose him a wife, Mordecai brought up Esther also, his uncle's daughter, whom he took for his own daughter.

Esther had neither father nor mother, and the maiden was fair and beautiful. So it came to pass that she was taken into the king's house with the other maidens, to the custody of Megai, keeper of the women. And Mordecai walked every day before the court of the women's house, to know how Esther did, and what should become of her.

Now when the turn of Esther was come to go in unto the king, she obtained favor in the sight of all them that looked upon her. And the king loved Esther above all the maidens, so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen.

After these things did King Ahasuerus promote Haman, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him. And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed, and did reverence Haman, for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence.

When Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was he full of wrath. Wherefore he sought to destroy all the Jews that were in the whole kingdom, even the people of Mordecai. And he said to the king, "Their laws are diverse from all the people; therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them. If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed."

The king took his ring from his hand, and gave it to Haman, saying, "The people are given to thee to do as it seemeth good to thee."

And so it was written to all the governors of all the provinces to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, and to take the spoil of them for a prey. And the king and Haman sat down to drink.

When Mordecai saw all that was done, he rent

his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and bitter cry. In every province also there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing. And many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

Esther's maids and chamberlains came and told it her. Then was the queen exceedingly grieved. Mordecai told Hatach, Esther's messenger to him, that she should go in unto the king, to make supplication unto him, for her people.

Then Esther said to Mordecai through her messenger, "Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day. I also and my maidens will fast likewise. And so will I go unto the king, which is not according to the law. And if I perish, I perish."

On the third day Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king's house. And the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house. And she obtained favor in his sight, and he held out to her the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre.

"What wilt thou, queen Esther?" asked the king, "for it shall be given thee to the half of the kingdom."

And Esther answered, "Let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him."

And the king said at the banquet, "What is thy petition? For it shall be given thee to the half of the kingdom?"

Esther answered, "Let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare for him on the morrow."

On that night could not the king sleep. And he commanded that the book of records be brought and read before him. And it was found written that Mordecai had told of two of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the door, who sought to lay hand on the king.

"What honor," asked the king, "hath been done to Mordecai for this?"

And they said, "There is nothing done for him."

The king called Haman. When Haman had come, he said, "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor?"

Haman, thinking he himself was meant, an-

swered, "Let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the royal crown which is set upon his head, for the man whom the king delighteth to honor; and let him be brought on horseback through the street of the city."

The king said, "Make haste, and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate."

And it was done as the king ordered.

The king and Haman came to the banquet of the queen on the morrow. And the king said unto Esther on the second day, "What is thy petition, queen Esther? For it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom?"

And she said, "Let my life be given me, and the life of my people. For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish."

"Who is he, and where is he," demanded the king, "that dost presume in his heart to do so?"

And Esther said, "The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman."

Then Haman was afraid before the king and queen.

One of the chamberlains of the king said, "behold also the gallows a hundred feet high, which Haman built for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman."

And the king said, "Hang him thereon!"

So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified. And he took off his ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.

And the king said unto Esther and Mordecai, "Write in the king's name to all the provinces, an hundred and twenty-seven, granting the Jews in every city the right to stand for their life, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that would assault them."

And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple. And the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad. The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honor, in every province and city.

Chapter XXXVII

A VOICE OUT OF THE WHIRLWIND

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord. Satan came also.

The Lord said to Satan, "Whence comest thou?"

Satan answered, "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it."

And the Lord said, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?"

Said Satan, "Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast thou not made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face."

The Lord answered, "Behold, all that he hath is in thy power. Only, upon himself put not forth thine hand."

So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.

Now Job lived in the land of Uz. There were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. And his substance also was great—camels, and oxen, and she-asses, and a very great household. So that he was the greatest of all the men of the East.

And once his sons and daughters were eating and drinking in their eldest brother's house. And there came a servant unto Job, and said, "The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them, and the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away. Also they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword. I only am escaped alone to tell thee."

While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, "The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and I only am escaped alone to tell thee."

While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, "The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, and slain the servants with

the edge of the sword, and I only am escaped alone to tell thee."

While he was yet speaking there came another also, and said, "Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking in their eldest brother's house; and there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead. And I only am escaped alone to tell thee."

Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshiped. He said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!" In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord. And Satan came also.

"Hast thou," inquired the Lord, "considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?" For still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause."

Satan answered, "Skin for skin, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now ,and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face."

"Behold, he is in thine hand," said the Lord. "Only, save his life."

So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.

And Job took him a broken piece of earthenware to scrape himself withal. And he sat down among the ashes.

Then his wife said unto him, "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die!"

But he said unto her, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speak. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"

In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

When some friends came to speak with him, Job said to them, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine

eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me!"

The Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, "Gird up now thy loins like a man, for I will demand of thee, Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? Or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? Or who laid the corner stone thereof—when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"

Job answered, "I know that thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from thee."

The Lord accepted Job. He turned his captivity when he prayed for his friends. Also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. He blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning—sheep, and camels, and oxen, and she-asses. He had also seven sons and three daughters.

So Job died, being old and full of days.

APPENDIX

Many people, including some teachers, fail to recognize the source of the desire that prompted Rebekah to wish Jacob to receive the blessing that Isaac seems to have intended for Esau.

Rebekah was unquestionably a woman of great spirituality. Whatever the Spirit of the Lord prompted her to do, that she quickly did. When asked to leave her mother's home she did so without the least hesitation. In the same way, not having children for some time, when she found herself about to become a mother she inquired of the Lord as to her condition and to her was revealed the destiny of the two nations that were to be the posterity of her twin boys. She therefore, loved the one who loved the Lord, and assumed to direct her son Jacob what he should do and say, and helped him obtain the blessing which God had destined him to have and which her headstrong son Esau had despised when he sold his birthright.

Nor was fear the uppermost thought either in her mind or in that of Jacob. The desire to

allow Esau's wrath to have time to cool was unquestionably in their minds. The real thought, aside from a desire to be a peacemaker, was to have her posterity to whom the Lord had told her millions would come, be born of women who believed in the true God. So with this noble thought in mind she allowed and even urged her favorite son to go away into a distant land never to see her again in this life, leaving to the son Esau, whom some erroneously consider cheated, all the wealth and possessions of Isaac of which Jacob was justly entitled to a large part at least.